

# SPACE WARS

SCI-FI COMIX

STUNNING  
TALES OF  
THE  
FUTURE!

02720

DEC. 1978

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THE  
GORGEOUS  
GIRLS OF  
GALACTICA!

PLUS:  
\* THE  
SPECIAL  
EFFECTS  
\* THE  
STARS  
\* BEHIND-  
THE-SCENES  
SCOOPS!

RAY-GUN  
BLASTER  
PLANS

HOW TO  
KILL A  
ROBOT

WALT  
DISNEY'S  
WIZARDRY



# BATTLESTAR GALACTICA EXTRAVAGANZA





# SPACE WARS

DECEMBER 1978

VOL. 2, NO. 5

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# EDITORIAL

We bid you greetings. Here is yet another spectacular issue of **SPACE WARS** for you, the fantasy, sci-fi film fans of today. And what an issue it is! Inside, you'll find a combination TV listing and movie review column, with scores of pages and exciting photos to boot! In this new issue we review for you the smash television show, **BAT-LESTAR GALACTICA** and its bevy of beautiful women. With **FUTURE FANTASY** we'll tell you what's coming up in the field of fantasy and science fiction. We'll also have

a talk with director Jeannot Szwarc, the man responsible for **JAWS 2** and episodes of Rod Serling's **NIGHT GALLERY** series. We also feature an instructional booklet on **HOW TO KILL A ROBOT**; and recap some sci-fi blasts from the past. So what are you waiting for anyway? Read on and enjoy one of the few pleasures left in life.



# BATTLESTAR

# GALACTICA



Ten years ago a TV show called *Star Trek* came upon the scene and forever changed the public's view of sci-fi. *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters* opened the floodgates of public approval. People couldn't get enough of the genre. This season ABC-TV is attempting to quench the public's thirst with their multi-million dollar epic adventure: *Battlestar Galactica*.

By Allan Asherman

science fiction was something enjoyed by a select number of

■ At the start of this decade, fans who read it, watched it on

Commander Adama explains the grim situation to the council of twelve. © 1978 Universal City Studios

film and spent a large part of their lives reading fanzines, attending conventions and trying to convince the rest of the world that science fiction fans are NOT retarded, NOT demented and NOT mindless. The movies had



▲ Captain Apollo lands his sleek Viper fighter ship on the war-devastated planet, Caprica. © 1978 Universal City Studios

their "cycles" of science fiction, or what was CALLED science fiction. Usually it was monsters, there for no purpose because the majority of film people didn't really know what science fiction was all about. The mass media tolerated an occasional mention of SF, but always with an implied apology to their non-fan majority. It was a time when science fiction fans continually had to defend their favorite topic, while the remainder of the world accepted **Lost In Space** as the epitome of SF.

Today you can't walk down the street without seeing posters, toys, games and other merchandise illustrated with spacemen,

robots, inhuman aliens, spaceships; a literal galaxy of science fiction-oriented artifacts and references, centered around **Star Wars** (20th Century-Fox; 1977), **Close Encounters Of The Third Kind** (Columbia; 1977), the ever popular **Star Trek ...** and **Battlestar Galactica**.

The world wasn't converted to an appreciation (or at least a tolerance) of science fiction overnight. It took changes in our technology, and innovative mass-media indoctrination. **Star Trek** helped a lot, convincing people that adventures on spaceships need not be stupid and mundane, and individuals with pointed ears need not behave like Satan. **Trek** went through many traumas because although the public was willing to accept it,

the powers that be in the broadcasting industry didn't understand its appeal or its image, and attempted to bury it.

**Star Trek** didn't stay buried because its characters had been accepted as realistic individuals by the show's followers. In addition to enjoying the adventures themselves, the fans were highly hooked by the interaction of its prime forces; Kirk, Spock and McCoy. The series, with its custom-made mythology, was also well done from its technical standpoints. In terms of writing, acting, direction, cinematography and editing, almost each episode of the series could have passed for an economy-sized feature film. Only the budget and time problems in its special photographic effects placed **Star Trek** into the ir-



Boxey (Noah Hathaway) with man's best friend, Daggit, a sort of hairy, bionic Panda. © 1978 ABC, Inc.

reviewable classification of "TV Series."

But that was yesterday. Technology has come a long way since **Trek** debuted in 1966. Today, special-effects can be just as sophisticated as [or more sophisticated than] character development, even in a TV series. This creates a trap. Given availability of all this hardware, can today's science fiction producers resist the challenge to let their characters fall by the wayside? The most sophisticated science fiction project on TV to date seems to have kept the proper perspective; at least so far. **Battlestar Galactica** has created a framework that is extremely enticing, and has peopled its universe with individuals who viewers can relate to, care about, publish fanzines about and discuss in detail at conventions. In short, the same qualities AND MORE that were present in **Star Trek** are in **Battlestar Galactica**.

This writer remembers what it was like, early in 1966 when the rumors about **Star Trek** first began to circulate through fandom. It seemed too good to be true, and it was

with a great deal of suspicion that I sat down at the World Science Fiction Convention in Cleveland, Ohio in 1966 to see **Star Trek** for the first time. I never thought that it could be duplicated for me; the thrill of knowing I'd discovered something that would provide me with untold entertainment. This sensation was duplicated, though, the night I sat down in front of my TV set to watch the first installment of **Battlestar Galactica**. I was hooked. I was happy. I'm still happy, and apparently I have company that includes the people who actually worked on the show.

Dennis Muren, who worked with Richard Edlund to execute the model photography on **Battlestar Galactica**, is one of the current generation of motion picture craftsmen whose genius is carving out new horizons of perfection and scope for the rallying Hollywood industry. Dennis served in the same capacity

on **Star Wars**, and accomplished the Mother ship photography for **Close Encounters Of The Third Kind**, in addition to his other impressive credits. His observations are those of experience that has resulted from a strong dedication to motion pictures as an art form. Of **Galactica**, he says:

"It is very ambitious for a television show to try anything on this level, to try and equal the quality of **Star Wars** not only in writing, directing and acting, but in sets, costumes and every other department as well. We had every department at Universal, and Industrial Light and Magic spending a fortune ... it's going to be the most elaborate thing ever seen on television."

Dennis' reflections concern the first three hour extravaganza premier installment of **Galactica** [one can't really call it an "episode"]; when I spoke with him, he had not seen the second, two hour installment in its final



Partners in deceit; clockwise from top left; A Cylon warrior, an Ovion, and the Imperious Leader of the Ceylons. © 1978 Universal City Studios

form, and had not seen any of the subsequent **Galactica** scripts.

In visual terms, **Battlestar Galactica** is similar to **Star Wars**; so much that Twentieth Century-Fox is reputed to have instituted a lawsuit against the television project. Rumor has it that at least one scene was cut from the initial segment for this reason, and the designs of the Colonial Vipers are more than slightly suggestive of snub-nosed X-wings. Such similarities are to be expected, considering that many members of the **Galactica** staff worked on both projects. But what about the technological end of the TV epic? Dennis Muren reflects on this.

"The designs of these shots are beyond anything we had in **Star Wars**. John Dykstra was pretty free in giving Richard Edlund and I say over the design of the shots he wanted. We had storyboard artists who would do an idea of what the shots would look like, and then we could add all the motions to it if we wanted to."

The Dykstraflex camera system, with its motion control capability, was the most effective combination of a series of

ideas that had been used in films going back to the 1930s. When Dykstra and his crew designed and perfected their system at the Industrial Light and Magic Company, they performed their initial efforts for **Star Wars** on a tight deadline. They realized that if they could have the time to experiment with their new treasures, they could accomplish shots that had long been dreamed of, but had never been executed. Remarkable exercises in special effects abound in the first **Galactica** segment. The crew was dealing with startling ratios, with the insect-like Cylon craft "buzzing" angrily around the huge **Battlestar**. Of these shots, Dennis Muren has approximately 12 that are his favorites.

"When the **Battlestar** *Atlantia* gets destroyed, I did three shots with the **Battlestar** on fire, and the Cylon ships dogfighting around it.... We did that, and there are two shots especially where we really get heavily into the scale of it. One starts out looking at an enemy Cylon, and pans over as the Cylon starts diving down on the **Galactica**. And then you race in following on the tail of the ship as the **Galactica** starts looming bigger and bigger in the background. ... Richard Edlund did two or three really spectacular shots of the Cylon home base; one where you move in on the base and you follow a Cylon ship into the docking port. The shot runs for about a minute; the Cylon gets smaller and smaller and cruises into a port."

The latter shot was produced utilizing multiple elements, with each separate ingredient being photographed separately, and combined as an optical jig-saw puzzle to generate the final effect. Unfortunately, the film's editors saw fit to interrupt some of these masterpieces of special effects, intercutting reaction shots of actors or establishing shots of backgrounds into the mid-dies of optical pans.

On a production of this



The lovely Athena (Maren Jensen); prepared for any circumstance. © 1978 Universal City Studios

magnitude, executed within respect to the television season, one editing crew could not have been enough. There were apparently three crews working on **Galactica**, and the communication between these groups was probably lacking in spots. There is one effects shot, which ran for a total of 8 seconds, that shows up more than five times in the premiere installment.

Work commenced on **Battlestar Galactica** in the late summer of 1977. The first



Lieutenant Starbuck and Captain Apollo; space pilots extraordinaire. © 1978 ABC, Inc.



order of business was to sell the show to ABC. For this purpose, a short demonstration reel of special-effects footage, coupled with some live-action, was prepared. This first reel probably ran approximately 10 minutes. Later, another 20 minute reel was prepared to sell this series to the ABC affiliate stations.

The test reels did their job, much as the test reel prepared for **King Kong** (RKO; 1933) got its point across. The people who saw the reels were very impressed. Considering the **Star Wars** situation, the TV personnel realized that if they could

The foreboding facemask of the Cylon warriors. © 1978 ABC, Inc.

duplicate the feelings of vastness, excitement and originality for their television audience, they would have quite a hit on their hands. An extremely substantial amount of money, probably more than has ever been spent on a TV production before, was allocated to **Battlestar Galactica** with wonderful results in terms of its opening segment.

How much of **Galactica** came from the heads of its coproducers Glen Larson and John Dykstra? As in every production, some inspiration was derived from previous attempts, but the most striking similarities are not in connection with **Star Wars**,



but with **Star Trek**.

Gene Roddenberry has stated many times that he looks upon writing science fiction as he would write a western, or any

Special effects genius John Dykstra points out the surface details of the **Galactica**. © 1978 ABC, Inc.





▲ Commander Adama (Lorne Greene) and his son Captain Apollo (Richard Hatch) prove that there is Ultra-Bright in outer space. © 1978 ABC, Inc.

period piece. The important difference is that history is irrevocably recorded, and cannot be changed [although it can be considerably editorialized]. Science fiction, however, concerns the future and, to produce it successfully, the writer must not only concern himself with his story, but with the framework in which the tale takes place. Whole worlds, civilizations and mythos have to be created. If the job is not done right, the result is a failure.

In more than one instance, Roddenberry referred to *Star Trek* as "A Wagon Train in outer space." This phrase was used by the producer solely as a convenience to get network personnel to understand what he was trying to do with *Trek*. This same statement has been used in connection with *Battlestar Galactica*, and herein lies the secret of the show's success.

After the vicious Cylon attack, the remnants of the human race stream to the Galactica; led here by Serina (Jane Seymour). © 1978 Universal City Studios

Producer Glen Larson is quite an idea man. His past efforts for television include *It Takes A Thief*, *Alias Smith and Jones*, *Switch* and *Quincy*. Just as Gene Roddenberry's initial television experience was with police shows and westerns, Glen Larson used his previous experience to create a science fiction matrix based upon plausibility rather than cliché. The result is a hybrid of the Noah's Ark (which was in fact the basis of Larson's earlier series idea that evolved into *Galactica*), *Wagon Train*, with more than a touch of *Bonanza* thrown in. For other inspirations, he draws on the Old Testament,

Les Misérables (which evolved into *The Fugitive*) and *How The West Was Won*.

In *Galactica* we have a people being saved from their oppressors by one man who sets off on a quest for their promised land of security. It is no accident that Commander Adama's name is derived from a Biblical character. What occurred to the unjustly accused Frenchman Jean Valjean in the novel *Les Misérables* happens on an epic level in *Galactica*. A relentless enemy forces an entire people to change its life-style, give up all its comforts and become hunted like animals.

Another key to the series' acceptance is its optimism, not unlike the pioneer spirit exemplified in *How The West Was Won* (MGM; 1962). The people of *Star Trek* had conquered their hangups. Earth had achieved peace and presumably world government, and mankind had gone out into the stars bearing friendship and life. In *Battlestar Galactica* humankind must first begin to cancel out age-old rivalries between colonies. They are forced out into space where they must seek their future lives, and their key phrase must be "We're going to make it!"

**Space: 1999** tried it on a lesser scale, but it lacked two important prerequisites for suc-

cess, humanity and believability.

What *Battlestar Galactica* lacks in total science fiction believability, it creates in the same way. *Star Wars* hooked its audience. *Star Wars* was a fantasy, there was no two ways about it. Any story that starts out "Once upon a time..." is a fairy tale; a story of faith told in allegory. With *Battlestar Galactica* the situation is more complex. You know the tale is taking place within a scientific realm of possibility, but you really have no idea when or where this is all happening. Is it long ago and far away, or is it taking place in the here and now? Will the *Galactica* and its space-train reach Earth yesterday, today or tomorrow? Only the writers know for sure, but if the rest of the series lives up to its introductory piece, the outcome and all stops along the way should be extremely interesting.

There is a winning set of characters here, all exhibiting very human characteristics. The book *Battlestar Galactica* (written by Glen Larson and Robert Thurston, published by Berkley Books) is required reading for those who wish to know the characters intimately.

A cylon warrior; mechanized troops of the dreaded Alliance whose primary objective is the destruction of the human race. © 1978 ABC, Inc. ▼

The books 10 chapters, each preceded by an extract from "Adama's Log," is literally specific even where the film must be generalized to avoid being bogged down. In the book we can invade the characters' minds, to here anecdotes and comparisons the film can only hint at. 244 pages is structured not unlike the Old Testament, complete with its book of "proverbs" [Adama's Journals].

Just as there was a series if *Bonanza* episodes in which we met Ben Cartwright's late wives, Commander Adama's wife Ilia will probably be introduced to us in detail via flashbacks (unless she turns up safe on one of the fugitive space ships). Likewise with Zax, the 23 year-old overconfident whiz-kid who was killed at the start of the entire proceedings.

Apollo and Athena Adama [Richard Hatch and Maren Jensen] are the survivors of Adama's [Lorne Greene's] family. Just as Kirk, Spock and McCoy were reputed to be 3 segments of a single personality, these three are linked together as effectively as were Ben Cartwright and his sons on *Bonanza*. Each strives for the same cause; each has his own drives and characteristic focal points. Each carries within him a bit of the Adama mystique; the driving force that guides the humans to salvation. Happily, the human traitor Baltar [John Colicos] quickly becomes a thing of the past. Following the *Star Trek* device of assigning character names that apply to the individual, "Baltar" is derived from the word "bater" [to become tangled].

Stretching the business of names, we come to some interesting derivations. "Adar" is a Hebrew month which happens to include the early part of March ["Caesar... Beware the Ides of March!"]. The hapless President Adar [Lew Ayres] met his death when his trusted middle-men Baltar betrayed him.



A domineering view of a wicked Cylon wielding his laser weapon. © 1978 ABC, Inc.

Colonel Tigh [Terry Carter] is Adama's friend and aide. A "tigh" is the support for the primer in a type of cartridge. This name might also come from an obscure piece of modern folklore. "Buster Brown," the boy in the shoes, in the old jingle, has a dog who lives in the shoe with him... and the dog is Tigh his friend.

Or. Paye [John Fink], Chief Medical Officer of the *Galactica*, also conforms to the *Star Trek* role of Dr. "Bones" McCoy [The first time we see him he's setting a broken bone.] He officially goes on record as saying "With equipment like this I'm just a mechanic," something "Bones" would approve of. One of the meanings of the word "pay" is

(Continued on page 65)



# FUTURE FANTASY

This season, as in the past, fantasy films will be coming at us in full force. Big-budget epics and star-studded casts are attempting to counter the negative image the public has of the genre. Will they be successful? Read on and decide.

By Tom Rogers

□ ITC Entertainment is currently making **The Boys from Brazil**, based on Ira Levin's novel about a group of Hitler clones that are growing up in our midst. One day, the hero learns that a new-Nazi group, headed by former German officials from the World War II era, is waiting for the time when one of the clones will lead them to world domination. This \$12 million suspense thriller, which will be released by 20th Century Fox, is being directed by Franklin Schaffner, with Robert Fryer as executive producer and

Five astronauts from the planet Venus head for Earth in 2069: **A SEX ODYSSEY**.



Stanley O'Toole and Martin Richards as co-producers. Kenneth Ross and Heywood Gould wrote the script. Gregory Peck, Laurence Olivier, James Mason and Lilli Palmer head the distinguished cast.

Doug McClure, Lea Brodie and Peter Gilmore prepare to enter the underwater city of the *Warlords of Atlantis*.

Did you ever hear the one about the seven-foot-tall zombie that was possessed by a demon? Well, this is the premise for Film Ventures International's newest, **The Dark**. Predictably, the monstrous-looking creature dislikes anyone who has a better visage than it does, so it pretends that it's a Wookiee and pulls people's arms out of their sockets—and worse. The screenplay by Stanford Whitmore was directed by John Cardos, and co-produced by Dick Clark (anybody know who he is?) and Edward Montoro. William Devane, Cathy Lee Crosby, Richard Jaeckel, Keenan Wynn, and Vivian Blaine star.

A few years ago, New World Pictures released **Death Race 2000**, which was about a society that condoned murder





A bird right out of hell blinds a woman who knows too much about DAMIEN-OMEN II.

through the use of strange vehicles; in fact, they encouraged it. **Deathsport**, the supposed sequel, will soon be out in local

theaters, and it is considerably different in some ways. David Carradine, Claudia Jennings, Richard Lynch, William Smithers, and Will Walker are cast; Roger Corman produced, Henry Suso and Allan Arkush co-directed,

and Suso and Donald Stewart worked on the screenplay. The time herein is 1,000 years in the future, after a neutron war. The world is now separated into isolated city-states, which are the old areas of nuclear and military technology. Outside these centers are the mutants — cannibals, of course — and the dreaded range guides — "rare, positive mutations." The latter are equipped with telepathic abilities, super-strength, and incredible reflexes and coordination. They are warriors supreme, leading a nomadic existence, loyal only to themselves and their Code. The movie title pertains to an annual event, held in one particular metropolis, during which condemned criminals fight to the death. Such is the world of the future, as envisioned in this fast-paced drama.

New World is also releasing **The Evil**, starring Richard Crenna, Joanne Pettet, Andrew Prine, Cassie Yates, and Victor Buono. Paul Joseph and Malcolm

The monstrous Zaarg blocks the explorer's way to the city of Atlantis.





◀ Jor-El (Marlon Brando) and Lara (Susannah York) bid farewell to their son, the soon to be SUPER-MAN, as they prepare to send him from the doomed planet, Krypton.

Levinthal are executive producers on this one, Ed Carlin is producer, Gus Trikonis is director, and Donald Thompson did the screenplay. The tale is set in the traditional old mansion, complete with terrible forces that are released by the typical unsuspecting couple that move in, make a mess of things, and inadvertently menace the world. To make matters worse, the man is a psychologist, and wants to transform the place into a drug clinic. Almost as soon as the pair and their assistants start cleaning, luminous apparitions materialize, and distinct acts of

A **DEATHSPORT** rider frees himself from a fiery grave. ▼



psychokinesis take place. A dog, which one of the group brings along, goes down to the cellar and turns vicious, and afterward the hero finds a secret trap in the floor, locked by an iron key. He opens the door, releasing an unseen force that erupts and slams every window and door in the house. One at a time, the

**GODZILLA ON MONSTER ISLAND** fights Gigan, a monster from the Andromeda Galaxy as Japanese models look on. ▼



trapped humans are tormented and slain by the freed thing — which happens to be the Devil himself. There is more to the lurid tale, but we don't want to spoil it for you.

American International is currently lensing **The Amityville Horror**, based on supposedly-true occurrences at a haunted house.

Cinema Shares is finally going to release **Godzilla on Monster Island**, which was made back in 1972 as **Godzilla vs. Gigan**. The cast for this one includes Iroshi Ishikawa, Minoru Takashima, Tamoko Umeda, and



▲ This alien from 2069: A SEX ODYSSEY cleverly disguises herself as a nun.



▲ Gregory Peck, one of THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL, repeats a scene he played in THE OMEN as he is again determined to kill a demon child.

Kunio Murai [as if it mattered]. It was produced by Tomoyuki Tanaka, directed by Jun Fukuda, and written by Shinichi Sekizawa, for Toho (of course). Not only do the "Big G" and Gigan get to slug it out herein, but Angurus and Ghidrah — two old favorites [?], join in, with some alien invaders on the side.

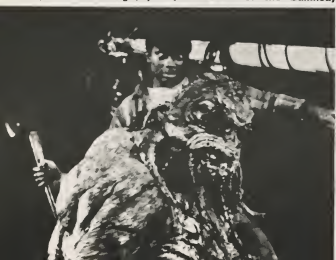
The chilling, color remake of **Invasion of the Body Snatchers** will be out from United Artists at the end of 1978. Having the same name as the original science-fiction classic, it deals with an invasion from outer space by seedpods that can duplicate human beings physically

and mentally. Unfortunately, the originals die, and the replacements lack emotions. The new version takes place during the present, in San Francisco, and contains an amusing scene in which Kevin McCarthy runs through the streets trying to warn everyone that the creatures are still among us. Donald Sutherland stars as a public health inspector who accidentally learns about the infiltration, and decides to combat them. Unlike the original, this rendition strives to be scientifically plausible. Brooke Adams, Veronica Cartwright, Jeff Goldblum, and Leonard Nimoy head the supporting cast.

American International has the rights to a Spanish thriller entitled **Island of the Damned**,

which stars Lewis Fander, Antonio Iranzo, Maria Luisa Aires, Prunella Ransome, and... the Children. It begins when a young British couple journey to an island off the coast of Spain. As soon as they arrive, they discover that there don't seem to be any adults around; only children. Before long, they realize that, for some reason or another, the kids have slain all of their elders, and the newcomers are next. While the man and his pregnant wife are attempting to escape, whatever unknown evil is causing the youngsters to revolt causes the embryo to kill its mother while it is still in her body. Alone now, the man ends up being shot when a police patrol boat arrives and misinterprets his fight with the children. The officers pay for the mistake with their lives, and the little murderers board their craft and head for the mainland to recruit others in their terrible cause. So much for the patter of little feet.

**The Lord of the Rings**, which is the first of two animated, feature-length films based on the vastly popular trilogy of J.R.R. Tolkien. Both movies will cost



▲ A startled seaman feasts his eyes on this carnivorous sponge from SLITHIS.



▲ Lea Brodie portrays an inhabitant of the city beneath the sea in *Warlords of Atlantis*.

around \$16 million by the time they are completed, largely because they are being almost entirely rotoscoped — which means that live-action, on-location footage is being shot so that the cartoons will be much

more realistic-looking. Ralph Bakshi is directing, and Saul Zaentz is producing these tales of hobbits, trolls, monsters, orcs, magicians, sword and sorcery, and adventure. In more



▲ Dr. Kibner comforts a distraught housewife (Lelia Goldoni) in an early scene from *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.



▲ Donald Sutherland stars as Mathew Bennell.

ways than one, this rendition should be much better than NBC's full-length cartoon adap-



TV station owner Sharon Allan (Elizabeth Ashley) attempts to warn the people of Phoenix that a comet will soon hit their city. Of course, the public doesn't believe her and **A FIRE IN THE SKY** destroys their city.

tation, **The Hobbit**, which was done by Rankin-Bass. Incidentally, the same company is currently developing **The Hobbit, Part II**, for TV release.

20th Century Fox's so-so offering, **Damien — Omen II**, was merely an interlude between the first masterpiece, **The Omen**, and the final entry in the trilogy (although four movies were originally planned). The final segment remains untitled as of this writing, but I have been informed that it will supposedly deal with Damien (did you guess?) as a 28-year-old corporate head who is out to cause the dreaded Apocalypse through conflict over food manipulation. Apparently — as in AIP's **The Chosen** — the demonic offspring will be slain or immobilized before he can complete his plans. Additionally, the movie will probably lack the Christ figure that according to the bible should bring about the fiend's downfall. Aside from these disappointments, the final

Hero Bilbo and a variety of supporting characters from NBC's **The Hobbit**.

chapter — **The Omen, Part III** — should at least be fairly good.

David Allen, a famous and highly talented stop-motion animator, is currently working on **The Primevals**, and it will take him an estimated year-and-a-half to complete the intricate special effects. In addition, he is producing, co-writing the screenplay, and supervising all of the fx. Charles Band is executive producer, having been pleased with Allen's work on **Laserblast**. Not much is known about the storyline, but it is supposed to contain dinosaurs, lizardmen,

(Continued on page 60)

A giant octopus in a playful mood with Lea Brodie.





# A CLOSER LOOK AT THE GIRLS OF GALACTICA



This fall ABC is presenting *Battlestar Galactica*, a science fiction series about a war-torn peoples quest for peace and tranquility. Along their exciting trek, we meet up with many interesting characters; aliens, monsters, star pilots and, in the tradition of ABC a bevy of beautiful women.

By Doug Murray

Being a colonial pilot ain't all it's cracked up to be. Sure, we get to wear nifty outfits, and sure, we get to call ourselves "warriors" and strut around our home planets, but basically, it's really a lonely job—stuck out in space, on some god-forsaken "Battlestar", just waiting. Or flying missions against an enemy that tends to outnumber us ten or twelve to one. Still, though, there are compensations.

Right here on Galactica we've got one of the top compensations in the fleet. Athena is really something special; tall and dark, with all her parts in just the right places, and a brain to match her looks. She won't be happy until she's commander of the whole ship, but for now, she has to be content with being an operations programmer.

Oh, sure there are problems. After all, she is the daughter of Commander Adama, and it wouldn't be wise to have the commander angry at a mere Viper Pilot. And then there's her brother, Captain Apollo. But he's a square shooter and wouldn't be much trouble. No, the biggest problem is her attachment to Starbuck. She's crazy about him, and although he's a bit shy around her, he's no one to rub the wrong way.

The lovely Maren Jensen stars as Athena in the upcoming sci-fi blockbuster, *Battlestar Galactica*. © ABC, Inc. 1978



be him that rescued her from the Ovions. That combination of the physical attraction and hero worship with a smattering of gratitude, can be murder.

Oh well, there's Serina. I used to watch her newscasts while on leave on Caprica. She was the idol of everyone; all the girls copied her hairstyles and clothing styles. In person, she's even better—soft brown hair over the face of an angel—and has as much of everything else as the socialator, all in all, quite a lady. Sure, she's got a kid, but the kid is alright, and her concern about him gives you more of an idea of what kind of person she really is.

Of course, she's taken, too, our fearless leader, Apollo moved pretty quickly. To tell the truth, I envy him just a bit.

It's nice to fantasize, but, as we all know, there is no Battlestar Galactica, [at least, not yet—or is it no longer?] But there is a TV series of the same name—and in addition to all the

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Colonel Tighe (Terry Carter) and Athena (Maren Jensen) at the controls of the Galactica. © 1978 ABC, Inc.

Of course, since the Cylon ambush and the loss of the Colonies, the Galactica's just jammed with beautiful women. There's Casseopia, the Socialator from Gemmon. They say that a "Socialator" is really something special, and this one certainly is. Between her long blonde hair, and that sexy little overbite, she's the answer to a spaceman's dream.

Of course, she's no dummy either. She couldn't be to reach the top of her rather competitive profession. Still, she's certainly worth a look—and, perhaps, a bit of effort. Sure is a shame that she fell for ole Starbuck and an even bigger shame that it had to




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In the series, Jane Seymour portrays Serina, an interplanetary television commentator. © 1978 ABC, Inc.



Jane Seymour is a newscaster; Maren Jensen is an officer aboard an outer space aircraft carrier; and Laurette Spang is a call girl from another planet, in the futuristic fantasy, *Battlestar Galactica*. © 1978 Universal City Studios.

action, adventure, violence, and super special effects anyone could want—there's also something special in the way of ladies.

ABC has built their ratings lead with the help of the so-called "jiggle" shows: **Charlie's Angels**, **Three's Company**, **Sugar Time**, etc.—now, with a sure winner in the effects-full **Galactica**, ABC has added a little of their sure-fire "jiggling," and the result is a knockout.

Series regular Athena, daughter of Lorne Greene's Adama is played by the young Maren Jensen. Maren, one of the innumerable fashion models trying to "make it" in movies and TV is a beautiful, green-eyed



Serina (Jane Seymour) helps Boxey (Noah Hathaway) to the *Galactica*, and safety. © 1978 Universal City Studios.



Lt. Starbuck (Dirk Benedict), Cassiopea (Lorette Spang) and Captain Apollo (Richard Hatch) have a brief respite in their battle against the Ceylons. © 1978 Universal City Studios.

brunett with an interesting role. As a girl who is both daughter to the Battlestar commander and love interest to one of it's pilots, Maren treads a thin line between mere decoration, and a real purpose. Athena must be strong as well as beautiful, and sequences in the premier episode when she first talks a damaged Viper to safety, and later stands up for her beleaguered father in a family argument, show that she has what it takes. Look for more and more of Maren Jensen in future weeks.

Laurette Spang, playing the socialator Casseopia has made a living for some years doing TV commercials, generally as a dizzy blonde consumer. Laurette eventually had to change her image to get better parts.

(Continued on page 65)



Maren Jensen the beauteous communications officer of the Galactica © 1978 ABC, Inc.

# they came from beneath the sea

By Bob Sheridan

■ Since the dawn of history, man has been fascinated by the sea. He has conquered it with ships, first above and then below the surface. In recent years, explorers such as Jacques Cousteau have investigated the vast world below the waters. Despite all these explorations, the seas still comprise a world of mystery—and fear. Motion pictures, a popular art form, exploit the hopes and fears of their audiences, and so, science-fiction filmmakers have frequently turned to the seas as a source of anxiety-producing excitement. Sightings of mermaids and sea serpents date back at least as far as recorded history. In recent years, the motion picture industry has given us **JAWS** and its various offspring. While the monster in **JAWS** is a super shark, it is easy to see that the film is a classic sea monster story, reworked into a more "realistic" premise for the "sophisticated" audiences of the 1970's. Still, motion picture history is filled with examples of bona fide monsters of the deep.

Jules Verne's **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea** and its sequel, **Mysterious Island**, both written in the late nineteenth century, inspired a number of filmmakers during the silent film era to produce undersea adventures in emulation of Verne's Captain Nemo and his submarine the Nautilus. Titles such as **SECRET OF THE SUBMARINE** and **THE MYSTERY SHIP** appeared along with official adaptations of both of Verne's Nemo novels. Undersea people and monsters were introduced in the 1929 version of **MYSTERIOUS ISLAND**; even acrobatic Douglas Fairbanks battled with some sort of giant underwater spider in Raoul Walsh's **THIEF OF BAGDAD** (1914).

After the silent era, undersea monsters all but vanished for two decades, at least as far as the movies were concerned. Buster



Monsters made a big splash in Tokyo.



Fearful Londoners flee before the carnage of *The Giant Behemoth*.



*The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* rises from prehistoric times to crush and contaminate all that stood in its path.



*Gigantis—The Fire Monster*, a.k.a. Godzilla, prepares to do battle with the dreaded Anguirus.

Crabbe as **FLASH GORDON** battled an octopus, among other adversaries. Also during the 1930's, Britain produced a film entitled **THE SECRET OF THE LOCH**. The film's alternate title, **THE LOCH NESS MONSTER**, gives a more blatant idea of the subject matter. Low budget and boring, **SECRET OF THE LOCH** concerns a reporter who investigates persistent reports of sightings of "Nessie", a mysterious beast supposedly inhabiting Scotland's Loch Ness. The most amusing bit in the film is an artist's conception of Nessie—as a dancing brontosaurus wearing kilts! The real monster is quite a letdown when it finally appears in the film's closing sequence. It seems to be an ordinary iguana lizard double-exposed with a fishtank to give the illusion that it is underwater, the impression of the lizard being gigantic was "achieved" through the use of a miniature figure of a man in a diving suit.

It wasn't until the post-World War II science fiction film boom that undersea monsters came into their own, cinematically. The atomic bomb, possibly the war's most famous product, became the villain of the decade in the science-fiction films of the 1950's. Eugene Lourie's **THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS**, partially inspired by Ray Bradbury's short story of the same name (a.k.a. "The Foghorn"), was the first film to use the theme of a prehistoric beast being awakened from suspended animation by atomic testing. The title character of this 1953 thriller journeyed by sea from the Arctic, (where it had been awakened) to New York, which according to the film is a sort of dinosaur's version of the elephant burial ground. Along the way, the Beast wrecks ships and a lighthouse, dines on a diving bell [where we witness an octopus/shark fight], and then comes ashore at a pier for a stroll through New York. It is after the beast is cornered and is wounded by bazooka fire that it is

discovered that the misplaced monster is radioactive. Its blood begins to contaminate the soldiers who had battled the beast. Ultimately a young and cocky Lee Van Cleef is called upon to fire radioactive isotope into an open wound in the beast's neck, causing a chain reaction which destroys the monster.

A year later, Japan offered their answer to Lourie's film in the form of **GOJIRA**, an enormous sea monster who appears to be a composite of a tyrannosaur, a gorilla, and an oriental dragon. Like **THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS**, **GOJIRA** is brought back to active life as a result of atomic tests, and is radioactive himself. However, **GOJIRA** has the ability to control his radiation, firing deadly blasts from his mouth. Directed by Inoshiro Honda, **GOJIRA** places much more emphasis on horror and tragedy than Lourie's **BEAST** had.

By the time **GOJIRA** was released as **GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS** in the U.S.A. it had been re-edited to include new footage featuring Raymond Burr. Before the release of this altered version [1956], **GOJIRA** had already spawned a sequel, **GOJIRA RAIDS AGAIN**. Since Go-



Bruce, the great white shark, proudly displays the worlds most famous set of Jaws.

jira/Godzilla had been totally disintegrated in the first film, the sequel introduced another creature of the same mythical species and, as a bonus, provided the second Gojira with an equally monstrous partner, Angorus. After an epic battle in Tokyo, Gojira kills Angorus and then gives him a radioactive cremation. Gojira himself is eventually frozen in ice. When Warner Brothers finally picked up the film for American release in 1959, they changed the title to **GIGANTIS, THE FIRE MONSTER**. However, when thawed out Gojira once again become Godzilla for American audiences in **KING**

**KONG VS. GODZILLA**. In addition to the seagoing Godzilla, this third entry in the series featured a brief appearance by a nauseating giant octopus.

Since the success of the Godzilla films, Japanese filmmakers have provided the world with countless monstrous menaces, some of which originated underwater. But, as time progressed, the films became more concerned with silly spectacle than with fear; rather than the genuine horror or science-fiction films, they became children's pictures.

In 1958, apparently inspired by the international success of

The creature in bondage; a publicity photo from *The Revenge of the Creature*.



*The Creature From the Black Lagoon* grins as he runs off with Julia Adams.







Things are not looking up for this duo as they face a dinosaur from *The Land Unknown*.

the first **GOOZILLA**, Eugene Lourie reworked **THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS** in to **BEHEMOTH, THE SEA MONSTER**, a British production released in America as **THE GIANT BEHEMOTH**. This time out Lourie concentrated on the physical horror of radiation burns, willfully inflicted by the film's title dinosaur.

Lourie entered the 1960's with **GORG0**, yet another prehistoric sea beast opus, but this time without a mention of atomic radiation. Instead, the villain is man himself, for insisting on tampering with nature instead of leaving her wonders well enough alone. If anything, **GORG0** looks ahead to the ecology-conscious films of the later '60's.

While Lourie made it clear that he had left the 1950's behind, we cannot do so just yet—there are too many sea monsters we'd offend by omission.

Giant undersea crabs inhabited the waters around **SPI0ER ISLAND**; they were presented with a realism which makes **SECRET OF THE LOCH** look like the original **KING KONG**.

Ray Harryhausen followed his special effects work on **THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS** with the even lower-budgeted **IT CAME FROM**

gigantic tentacles throughout the city, smashing through walls and crushing the panicked populace aimlessly. One of the film's highlights depicts the octopus being forced completely back into the water by men firing flamethrowers at the giant tentacles. Under-water, the octopus is blown to smithereens in a rather anticlimactic finale.

**THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD** (1957) was a giant under-water mollusk resembling an enormous irate caterpillar. While not large enough to demolish any major cities (or even small towns), the monster did manage to kill off a substantial number of supporting players in horrific fashion before being dispatched through the rather hesitant heroics of leading man Tim Holt.

At least **THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD** was substantially less laughable than **THE MONSTER FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR**, an early Roger Corman production featuring what appeared to be a mutated octopus with an appetite for land creatures such as cows and people. This monster was done in by a mini-sub in a predictably unspectacular finale.

A giant squid attacks Captain Nemo's Nautilus of 20,000



The most famous of movie submarines was given its most prestigious presentation in Walt Disney's 1954 version of **TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**.

James Mason played Captain Nemo in dignified fashion, and the Disney special effects department created an impressively elaborate Nautilus. In the early portions of the film the Nautilus was presented as a living sea monster with glowing eyes. Even though the Nautilus was revealed for the mechanical creation it was, the film refused to let audiences feel cheated out of a real monster. For, later in the film, there appeared the most famous giant squid in cinema history. For this sequence, a full-size, mechanically-operated squid was built. While this expensive creation no longer looks as realistic to modern audiences as one might hope, when the film was released the sea monster was a real showstopper.

**MYSTERIOUS ISLAND** came to the screen in 1961, but not from Disney Studios. Instead, the film was made by Columbia, with Herbert Lom making an impressive Nemo and Ray Harryhausen helming the special ef-

Leagues Under the Sea.



An observant sailor points to the tentacle belonging to the octopus of *It Came From Beneath the Sea*.

fects. The Nautilus, though featured prominently, never sailed during the film. For excitement, the film relied on a volcanic explosion and giant animals. While most of the latter were land-based creatures, the film's final monster was an oversized undersea mollusk with octopus-like tentacles. After a brief battle, this silent creature of the deep was dispatched by an electricity-firing gun designed by [who else?] Captain Nemo.

**CAPTAIN NEMO AND THE UNDERWATER CITY** (1970) was MGM's Verne-inspired third entry in the Nemo "series". Featuring a rather lacklustre performance by Robert Ryan as the Captain, the film was basically kiddie fare, offering little in the way of thrills or intellectual stimulation for older viewers.

A modern-day Nautilus, the Seaview, was the real star of Irwin Allen's **VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA** (1961) despite the alt-"name" cast headed by Walter Pidgeon. Among its many adventures, the Seaview encountered, as one might expect, another one of those giant giant squids like the one faced by the Nautilus a century (or, if you prefer, seven years) earlier.

Inspired by the success of

**VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA**, films of a similar nature appeared in later years. Titles such as **AROUND THE WORLD UNDER THE SEA** and **THE NEPTUNE FACTOR** were given to uninspired undersea sci-fi, invariably featuring unimpressive outsized marine life [ordinary sea animals enlarged through trick photography].

An odd submarine adventure which appeared prior to this trend was **ATOMIC SUBMARINE** starring Arthur Franz. This 1959 cheapie involved a flying saucer hidden beneath the sea. Manned by a hairy one-eyed monster, the alien ship was discovered and eventually destroyed by the crew of the title vehicle.

Universal Pictures, the horror kings of the 1930's and 40's, naturally turned to monster oriented science fiction in the 1950's. Along the way, they provided audiences with a couple of sea monsters of note. **THE LAND UNKNOWN** (1957) featured an aquatic dinosaur which repeatedly suffered the indignity [not to mention discomfort] of having large lit torches shoved into its mouth. But Universal's greatest success in

(Continued on page 62)



# THE MAN BEHIND JAWS 2: AN INTERVIEW WITH



## JEANNOT SZWARC

Avid fantasy film fans remember Jeannot Szwarc not only as the director of *Jaws 2*, but also as the master-mind of episodes of Rod Serling's *Night Gallery* series. Here Mr. Szwarc gives an in-depth interview of the trials and tribulations of a Hollywood director.

By Steve Swires

**Swires:** Most audiences and critics only recently became aware of you because you directed *Jaws 2*, but fantasy-film fans remember you as the director of many of the episodes of Rod Serling's *Night Gallery*. What was your background before that?

**Szwarc:** I was born on November 21, 1939, in Paris,

France. I never went to film school, but I was a big film buff. I created a theater group while I was in college—I went to H.E.C., which is like the French Harvard. Then I created a cinema club, and I used to show films and talk about them. When I got my master's degree I was supposed to do some graduate work at Harvard, but by then I was really hooked on films, so I decided I was going to try a career in that business. I got a little job with a company that was making mostly commercials and documentaries. I did some editing and writing, then I worked on short subjects. After that I was a production assistant on *Charad*, for Stanley Donen. I did a little bit of work on *Paris When It Sizzles*

for Richard Quine, and some second unit directing for French television. Then there was a big crisis in the French film industry, and there was just no work. I had been in the United States for one summer when I was 21, and I loved it. Also I was very much into "film noir"—directors like Howard Hawks and Raoul Walsh. So I decided to go to California.

I went there, and I was out of work for about three years. It was very tough. I realized that all my credits meant nothing, and that I would have to start from scratch. I also realized that nobody was going to give me a directing break, so I sort of broke in through production. I finally got a job at Universal Studios, where I did some writing, and I ended up



▲ A young girl, Cindy Grover, frantically swims to safety, with the huge sea monster close behind.

- ▶ Jeannot Szwarc explains the mechanics of a scene to his crew members before filming begins.

This poor girl's got her eye on the Bug.

being the associate producer of **Chrysler Theater**. They put me under contract as a writer/producer/director, and I became the associate producer of **Ironside**. I produced a couple of shows, and at last I got my first directing shot on **Ironside**. Then I quit whatever I was doing and went into free-lance directing.

**Swires:** How did you come to work on **Night Gallery**?

**Szwarc:** I knew Jack Laird, who was the producer of **Night Gallery** and had been one of the producers of **Chrysler Theater**. He's a big science fiction and fantasy buff, and so am I, and we used to talk for hours about H. P. Lovecraft. He started **Night Gallery**, and I directed a Rod Serling script called **Class of '99**, which starred Vincent Price. It turned out very well, and Rod Serling loved the show. He said: "I want this guy to direct all my scripts," so I ended up doing many more. In fact,

▶ A young girl, Jeanne Coulter, finds herself and her speed boat under shark attack in this scene from *Jaws II*.



Rod and I became very good friends. I loved the man.

**Swires:** You directed 22 episodes of **Night Gallery** in total, including eight episodes written by Serling and two written by Richard Matheson. Steven Spielberg, who directed two of Serling's scripts, told me that his dialogue created difficulties for some of the actors because of its density and rhythm. Did you find that to be a problem as well?

**Szwarc:** Not at all. In **Class of '99** Vincent Price played a professor, so it was very literary



▲ Director Jeannot Szwarc watches the progression of a scene while special still photographer Susan Ford looks on.

**Szwarc:** I don't know if that's entirely true. I know there were some problems. **Night Gallery**

was a very successful show. It had an enormous following in colleges, good ratings, and the sponsor loved it. Unfortunately, the head of NBC at that time never understood it, and the head of television at Universal at the time really wasn't crazy about it either. It was the sort of show that nobody could control. It was a very difficult show in terms of special effects and sets. It never fitted into any pattern—it wasn't a comedy and it wasn't a drama. The sponsor wanted the show to continue, but the network didn't know what to do with it. It became a real cult favorite. I found out later that there were prints of episodes being pirated in New York, and being sold under the table by dealers and at conventions.

You have to understand the nature of network programming.

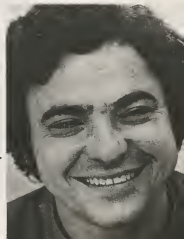
Jeannot Szwarc took one of the most logistically difficult films of all time, *Jaws II*, and turned it into an exciting and suspenseful motion picture.

▲ "Mmmmm my favorite food, cockroach cluster." The *Bug* strikes back.

They've made studies and found that if a viewer changes the channel during the evening, he will never switch back. There's an enormous amount of inertia which eventually translates into momentum. It takes a lot for somebody to change the channel, but once they do, it takes even more to get them to come back. Therefore the networks are

dialogue, but it really pertained to the character. Vincent is a very literary kind of person, so we didn't have any problems. Rod rarely gave very many visual indications in his scripts, which was sometimes a help and sometimes a hindrance. I think some of his scripts were difficult to translate visually, because they had a certain momentum and built to a certain point, and then the end of the show was like a cliff hanging over an abyss. As a matter of fact, a lot of his scripts literally continued after the show was over. The impact was what went on after. You had to find a way of visually finishing the episode in such a way that it really left you on a climax, but at the same time on a beginning.

**Swires:** It's been alleged that Universal interfered with Serling to such an extent that they actually rejected many of his scripts, and a result he attempted to have his name removed from the title of the show.



obsessed with losing the entire evening. If NBC lost with **Night Gallery** they might have lost the rest of the night as well.

**Swire:** They myth that's grown up around Rod Serling has it this master of imagination and insight was creatively castrated by Universal, after which he retired from his television wars and taught at Ithaca College for the last two years of his life.

**Szwarc:** That myth is not true, because Jack Laird was really the propeller of **Night Gallery**. Rod had a lot to do with it in terms of the flavor of the series, but Jack was the one who came up with the idea. He always wanted to do an anthology series which would use a lot of literary short stories. I'm sure it's possible that Rod had a lot of problems with Universal, but he was not the producer of the show. I started on the first season, and Rod's basic involvement was that he was consulted about whatever was done. He was in charge of the filmed introductions, and had a lot to do with the format, but he was not the person in charge. A lot of episodes were done without his involve-

ment. On the other hand, I don't want to take anything away from him, because I loved the man. I'm sure he was very frustrated in certain areas.

That series was a massacre for directors. Very few of them lasted on it. Rhythm was very difficult in a show like that. A lot of directors are obsessed with pace, but when you did something like **Night Gallery**, where mood and atmosphere were very important, sometimes you had to go slow in order to go fast. I've always had an affinity for that genre, however. After all, there's a tradition in French literature of fantasy and horror.

**Swire:** Your other major credit in the fantasy genre is **Bug**, which you directed for the late William Castle. I've always felt that his pictures were the kind that gave "horror films" a bad name, and that his best movies were **Rosemary's Baby** and yours, mainly because he didn't direct them.

**Szwarc:** He did one picture that I sort of liked—**The House On Haunted Hill**. That was not bad. There were some good things in it.

**Rosemary's Baby** broke his heart. He discovered the property, and he bought it when nobody

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This girl got an earfull of a giant cockroach in Szwarc's **Bug**.



However, it is the leaves  
scattered by the vibrations of  
earthquake that leaves  
the world in ruins.

# THE END IS NEAR

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The end is always near for us, as far as the movies are concerned. Disaster stories have existed as long as man has spoken and are today depicted graphically at our neighborhood theatres. Over the years we've been blown away in tornadoes, and destroyed in earthquakes; we've been flooded and burned, plagued and nuked, yet we keep coming back for more.

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By A. B. WHiteman

■ It seems as if mankind has always been fascinated with death, destruction and disaster. Since the days of the Bible, with its prophecies of Armageddon,

The unforgettable final sequence of *Planet of the Apes* answered many questions, and posed a number more.





Harry Belafonte is one of the only survivors after the war in *The World, The Flesh and The Devil*.

we've been devising ways to destroy not only each other, but the very ground we walk upon. And when we weren't busy killing ourselves, we knew there would always be plenty of natural disasters which did just as good a job. Either way, there have been

The complete title of *Doctor Strangelove*, shown here in its poster art, conveys the overall tone of the film.

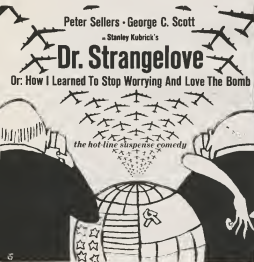
enough stories and legends about widespread carnage and mayhem to show us the error of our ways and make us live good clean lives. With the dawn of what we now call "classic" science fiction, we were introduced to aliens from outer space who would visit earth either to make friends or make war. In the 1940s the birth of the atom bomb made the total annihilation of our planet a very clear and gruesome possibility. There were many days not too long ago when people would wake up in the morning wondering if today would be the earth's last day.

Kubrick and George C. Scott pretend not to notice the costume of a co-player.

This subconscious fear of human extinction has manifested itself frequently in motion pictures, with varying results. Let's take a look at some of them.

As stated earlier, in the days before there were nuclear bombs to worry about, people

Stanley Kubrick, the director of *Dr. Strangelove*, readies a scene in General Buck Turgidson's home.



also starring Sterling Hayden Keenan Wynn Slim Pickens and co-starring Tracy Reed  
 Screenplay by Stanley Kubrick, Peter George & Terry Southern  
 Produced & Directed by Stanley Kubrick A Columbia Pictures Release



New York as it appeared in *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, after a nuclear holocaust and 2000 years of time.

The total destruction of nuclear combat as witnessed in George Pal's *The Time Machine*.



had to contend with any number of natural catastrophes. Movies dealing with these topics never failed to bring in the crowds. Merian C. Cooper, most famous for producing what might be called a "minor" disaster picture, **King Kong** [1933], always had a special place in his heart for stories like these; witness his productions of **Deluge** [1933]

Charlton Heston about to push the button that will finally put the Earth out of its misery, in *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*.

and **Hurricane**, whose titles should be self-explanatory. Even M.G.M. would try its hand with movies like **San Francisco** [1936] starring Clark Gable and Jeanette MacDonald [yes, it was about the 1906 Earthquake.] In

the much-admired **Things To Come** [1937], a major portion of the film deals with the world's next war, which drags on and on, eventually leading to a terrible plague ("Wandering Sickness") which kills half the world's popula-



A behind the scenes look at the Pentagon's War Room, with Peter Sellers playing the President (one of three parts he played).





The deluge of New York, caused *When Worlds Collide*.

tion. In the charming fantasy **The Man Who Could Work Miracles** [1937], Roland Young played the title role. He actually comes within seconds of destroying the world by wishing it would stop turning! When it happens, however, he sees the incredible chaos it causes, and withdraws his wish. Incidentally, it should be remembered that in their time, these films were powerful and highly regarded. Movie audiences of the Depression era were not used to seeing islands sink and cities collapse before their very eyes. If only they knew what awesome sights lay ahead for future moviegoers...!!

With the dropping of the atomic bomb on August 6, 1945, audiences all over the world were given a new instrument of mass destruction. The first picture to fully exploit the strength and terror of the weapon was **The Beginning or The End** [1946], which, while not science fiction, still helped capture the public's imagination. The story of the bomb's development was a dull one, but fresh enough to bring people into the theatres. It was only a few years afterward that filmmakers began to seriously explore the more far-fetched (or not so far-fetched) possibilities of the device, while still never losing the old "terror beyond our control" story line.



Producer George Pal was the man responsible for what are probably considered the two finest science fiction movies of the 1950's. The first, **When Worlds Collide** [1951] was unique in that it was the first major motion picture to actually do away with earth. In **Collide**, we, the audience suspect from the

Peter Sellers again, this time as the German scientist with the rebellious hand; *Dr. Strangelove*.

very beginning that there will be no last minute solution to save the planet from disaster. Halfway through the movie, our suspicions are confirmed when we witness one of the most expensive and extensive displays of destruction ever filmed. Briefly, the story deals with the earth's impending collision with the planet Bellus, speeding wildly

Vincent Price, *The Last Man on Earth*, battles the vampires of the world.





George C. Scott and Peter Sellers work out a scene before the cameras of Kubrick and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

through the galaxy. When scientists first break the news to the world, people laugh it off. By the time everyone believes the truth, it is almost too late. A massive attempt is made to construct a spaceship, to be used as a modern-day "Noah's Ark." The ship is completed but not before most of the planet is ravaged by some truly spectacular disasters [then flooding of New York City was one of the reasons **When**

Kubrick and Sellers discuss a scene in front of *The Big Board*.

**World Collide** won a special effects Oscar that year.) The ship finally takes off carrying a general representation of humans and animals. It's their hope to land on a moon of Bellus which, luckily, resembles Earth's atmosphere. Our world is drawn inexorably into the blistering heat of Bellus and disintegrates just before the spaceship's safe landing on Edenesque moon of Bellus.

Pal's other great science fiction extravaganza is the revered **The War of the Worlds** [1953]. The two films bear several similarities to each other, the most notable being some stunning optical effects and miniatures. In **War of the Worlds**, the inhabitants of the

dying planet Mars decide to invade and conquer earth. For the most part, they have a pretty easy job of it, as their flying war machines and death rays prove invincible against even the mightiest of mankind's bombs. Hope runs out for the human race as the martians set about blasting Los Angeles and the rest of the globe in an orgy of flame and smoke. Just as the end seems near and the few survivors are praying for a peaceful death, the war machines waver in the sky, then abruptly crash to the ground. The invasion has been halted and the martians are dying. Why? Cedric Hardwicke's reassuring narration at the end of the film tells us that bacteria the simplest of all creatures, killed the aliens, who had no resistance to such things. Not surprisingly, both Pal Productions, boasting the most lavish and convincing scenes of mayhem ever filmed at the time, were financial sensations. Even today, recently reissued in the midst of the **Star Wars**-outer space movie mania, they did rather well at the box office.

Inbetween **When Worlds Collide** and **The War of the Worlds**, a cheapie or two began popping up, a tendency that would last through the fifties, hit its peak in the sixties, and continue right into the seventies.

Colonel "Bat" Guano rides the nuclear bomb that started it all down to its designated target.



The first, **10000 Years From Now** [1951], is distinguished today only by its presentation of an atomically obliterated New York City. Actually, the film should have been titled 25 YEARS FROM NOW since Fun City already looks much the way it is represented in this turkey. **Five**, another from 1951, was much more interesting though also low-budget. As the title suggests, this is the story of five people who avoid the nuclear holocaust which wipes out everyone else. Concentrating mainly on character interaction rather than spectacle, it succeeded in many respects, thanks mainly to some good performances from a cast of unknowns. **World Without End** [1956] brought into play the now standard "time warp" cliché, where a spaceship suddenly finds itself in a time zone centuries beyond its original time. In this case it was 26th century devastated Earth. Apart from that and an appearance of a youthful Rod Taylor, the movie is

pretty routine. Dull is the word for **The Day the World Ended** [1956] a pretty laughable effort from Roger Corman and A.I.P. In this one, the inevitable survivors of the war search for a house uncontaminated by radiation, and finally find one. Their joy is short-lived, however, as they are chased through a valley by silly looking mutants (another time-honored cliché.)

Luckily, between the embarrassments, there were a few good films. **Earth VS. The Flying Saucers** [1956] was certainly one of them. Special effects master Ray Harryhausen's elaborate tricks diverted attention away from the bland plot of the handsome scientist battling yet more alien invaders with death rays. The opticals, especially the destruction of cities like Washington, D.C. and Paris, are exceptional.

Interesting in an odd sort of way, **The 27th Day** [1957] was at least unique. This time the

aliens decide to try and let us kill ourselves for a change. In different continents across the globe, a randomly selected human is given a box of capsules which, if opened, will destroy all human life. The concept of a handful of people with the power of worldwide destruction was cleverly handled. It all turns out to be a test of our maturity, we find out at the end, but not before an absorbing and literate story unfolds. This rarely revived film is well worth catching.

Alas, for every **7th Day** there is always a **Teenage Caveman** [1958], another Roger Corman classic starring, of all people, Robert Vaughn. This one pretends to be a caveman story until the very end when it is discovered that the time is not the stone age at all but rather the aftermath of (you guessed it) a nuclear war. ●

After the end of all life on the Earth. The scene is from *On The Beach*.





# THE SCIENCE FICTION WORLD OF WALT DISNEY

*Eyes in Outer Space; Earth surveillance from an orbiting space station.*

Walt Disney, a name normally connected with Mickey Mouse, Snow White or any of his other magnificent characters of fantasy, also had another, lesser known interest. Disney was fascinated with the world of tomorrow; the world of advancing science and exploration - the world of science fiction.

By Doug Murray

■ When **Disneyland** premiered on ABC TV in the fall of 1954, its opening credits focused on the diversity of both the show and the amusement park after which it was named. The announcer intoned that we would see, "...from Fantasyland, stories of wonder and delight; from Adventureland, tales of nature and excitement." But the most exciting announcement for

most youngsters, was that of "Tomorrowland, stories of space and the world of tomorrow."

True, Disney was not especially known for his science fiction stories rather, his reputation, was built upon his full length cartoon features, most of which were stories of pure fantasy. Yet, in the newly opened Disneyland [park], one of the major features was the TWA rocket flight to the moon, and the Disney folks had just finished a new movie version of **Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea**. But even so, this new TV venture promised much to the viewers of the time.

In 1943 Disney had made his first venture into the science fiction world. The Disney company had contributed hundreds of

man-hours and millions of dollars to the American military effort during World War Two. When Major Alexander de Seversky published his book about the growing power of the Air Force and its possible uses in modern warfare, Disney was convinced. Although Seversky's ideas were refuted by the higher echelons of the military, Disney decided to produce a documentary that would present the new ideas to the American people.

The finished film, replete with fastidious animation of huge bombing raids and scenes from the past, and future, **History of Aviation**, was a phenomenally powerful propaganda piece, and a remarkably successful look at air power in the near future.

In 1954, Disney released the

remarkable Richard Reischer version of **Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea**. Here, all the elements of the Disney Sci-Fi to come, were laid out and solidified. The story, from the pen of Jules Verne, is classic in scope and content, and follows the adventures of Professor Aronnax and his assistant aboard the submarine Nautilus, built and commanded by the mad visionary, Capt. Nemo.

Disney added sea farin' Ned Land, a heroic fellow equally capable of throwing a harpoon, a punch, or a song [Whale of a Tale]. Ned was there to give an everyman's view of the happenings aboard the futuristic sub.

The rest of Verne's story was left reasonably intact. Only the casting of Arronax's assistant, Consiel, (Peter Lorre) as a comic relief, differs from Verne.

The voyage of the Nautilus; its forays against the unnamed enemy's shipping; and its final destruction in a nuclear explosion are carefully chronicled throughout the film. Disney craftsmen painstakingly reconstructed the ship from Verne's original description, and the rather Victorian look of the finished vessel is perfect for the 19th century setting of the film. Additionally, James Mason's splendid and deep performance as Nemo is a joy to watch.

A special about the making of the film, *Operation Undersea* was the first TV presentation from Tomorrowland. The special, later released theatrically as a short subject, told of the problems of undersea filming, and gave an insightful look into the making of a motion picture under difficult conditions.

Later, in 1956, the first original Tomorrowland presentation was telecast. **Man in Space** was Disney's first real foray into "hard core" science fiction. Filmed as a combination of live action and animation, the film started with a cleverly done history of man's quest for the stars, documenting the work of



In this poster art, Captain Nemo's men gather food from the ocean floor, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.



The Nautilus searches for shipping carrying the weapons of war.



These immense towers from *Eyes in Outer Space* controlled the weather of the world.



*A Man Into Space* builds a space station in the void of the cosmos.

men like Isaac Newton and the writings of men as disparate as Copernicus and Cyranno de Bergerac. All of this led to the presentation of the work of Willey Ley, and Werner von Braun, the two space greats-to-be whom Disney had chosen as his authorities on the subject.

In that first film, the two expounded on the need for any space craft to reach an escape velocity to break free of Earth's atmosphere, and the possibility of using three-stage rocket craft to do just that. They then talked of the problems of travel in space—the necessities for protective clothing, new ways of eating, bathing, etc.

The whole production was climaxed by a live action simulation of a flight into space, the building of a space station, and an exploratory flight to the moon.

Disney had scored, and scored big with *Tomorrowland*. The show won an emmy in 1956 and was instrumental in the building

of the American space program

One year later, in 1957, Disney showed his next *Tomorrowland* adventure. This one, *Mars and Beyond*, was even more ambitious than the first. Again through the imaginations of Ley and Von Braun, we were led through the space-flight steps of the earlier show, and were presented with the possibilities of life on other planets [through a novel, animated film], and were shown a study of earlier fictions about planet Mars. Finally, we were led into an actual voyage to the Red Planet.

Again live action and animation were intermixed. The vehicle for this voyage was a bit different from the moon rocket. Powered by a nuclear reactor kept safely in the tail area, this flying-saucer-like vessel carries a completely separate landing and ascent module [10 years before NASA would use the design]. After a

relatively uneventful journey, the Mars mission goes into orbit around the Red Planet and the landing craft makes its historical trip to the surface. Strangely, the Disney crew chose to show no life on the martian surface—indeed, the planet was treated as a barren wasteland, much as we now know the surface truly to be.

The show ended with a quick discussion of possible interstellar travel, and an animated peek at the vessels such voyages would need. Needless to say, all this was extremely successful with the youthful Disney audience, although it would be another two years before we would again visit *Tomorrowland*.

In 1959, the TV screen once again lighted up with the wonders of space flight. Eyes in *Outer Space*, the third and final of the Disney *Tomorrowland* efforts, was a codification and compression of the first two shows. It

*(Continued on page 61)*

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THE COMBAT MONITOR EMISSIVE WAS THE LAST TO SHOW UP, AS USUAL... UNFORTUNATELY, I WAS FEELING RAIN... IT HAD BEEN A BAD NIGHT AND CHEAP BOUZE...

NO SCREW-UPS THIS TIME, SEE ME! NOT LIKE YESTERDAY!

EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER - WING LEADER!

"IT HAD DAMN WELL BETTER BE... OR THERE WILL BE HELL TO PAY!"



"RED STEEL ONE TO RED STEEL WINGS, YOU COPY 2 AND 3?"

"WE COPY, RED STEEL ONE GREEN ON COURSE 001 NINER..."

"CHECK, LET'S LEAVE MOTHER NEST..."



"RED STEEL ONE - COME IN, OVER."

"WHAT'S UP? SEE ME!"

"WE ARE APPROACHING BOGEY WEAPONS OUTPOST ON FLIGHT PLAN 003 7-TENER."

"THERE SHE IS, BOYS, SEAL YOUR SUITS... WE'RE BEGINNING OUR RUN... NOW!!"



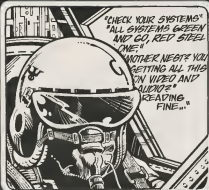




"WATCH IT, WATCH IT,  
RED STEEL 2, SHRAPNEL  
CROSSING YOUR BOW!"

"GOT IT, SIR. DID YOU SEE  
THAT STATION BLOW? AND  
THEY MISSED US CLEAN!"

"I SAW, WING 2. DON'T  
GET COCKY! KEEP ON  
THEIR TAIL. **GAUNTLET** STARTS  
RIGHT AHEAD."



"CHECK YOUR SYSTEMS"  
"ALL SYSTEMS GREEN  
AND GO, RED STEEL  
ONE."

"MOTHER NEST? YOU  
GETTING ALL THIS  
ON VIDEO AND  
AUDIO?"  
"READING  
FINE..."

"I TOLD YOU I  
WAS IN WORK-  
ING ORDER-  
WING-LEADER."



"STOW IT, SEE-ME!  
YOU **BLEW IT**  
YESTERDAY!  
YOU **COULD BLOW IT**  
**TODAY!**"



"I COULD-BUT-I WON'T, WING-  
LEADER. ATTENTION, DANGER."

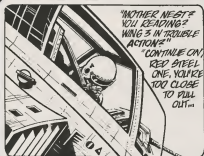
"COPY!"

"BOGEY-LINE- STATIONS  
COMING-UP- PREPARE-  
TO-MAKE-FULL-RUN-  
ASSAULT!"

"WING 3, CLOSE  
IT UP, YOU'RE  
STRAGGLING!"



"TROUBLE WITH POWER  
POD 16, RED STEEL ONE,  
SOURCE UNKNOWN, LOSING  
THRUST."



"MOTHER NEST? YOU  
READING?"  
"WING 3 IN TROUBLE  
ACTION?"

"CONTINUE ON,  
RED STEEL  
ONE, YOU'RE  
TOO CLOSE  
TO PULL  
OUT..."

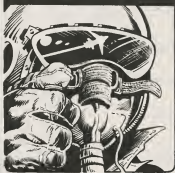


"... AND THE BOGEYS HAVE  
GOT YOU **PEGGED!**"

"JESUS! WING 3'S HAD IT! DIRECT HIT TO THE POD SECTIONS!" "FORGET HIM WING 2! EVE'S FRONT! WATCH OUT FOR THOSE LASER BATTERIES AT 3 O'CLOCK!"

"WING LEADER I AM REGISTERING DISRUPTER UNITS ON APPROACHING BOGEYS!"

"ANOTHER NEST? DAMN YOU! COPY ME..."



"RED STEEL ONE FOR GOD'S SAKE HELP ME! DISRUPTER BEAM... ON... maintain!"

"WING TWO! PULL OUT! PULL..."

"RED STEEL ONE -- THIS IS MOTHER NEST WE NO LONGER HAVE VISUAL CONTACT WITH WING 2. CAN YOU VERIFY?"

"VERIFY? VERIFY??? YOU SUCKING GHOU! HE'S GONE!"

"DISRUPTERS 621? WHAT THE HELL IS THIS, MOTHER NEST... NOBODY MENTIONED ANYTHING ABOUT THOSE BONS O'BITCHES!"

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU  
CREEPS TRYING TO PULL?  
THIS IS JUST LIKE YESTER-  
DAY! WHAT KIND OF  
GAME ARE YOU PLAYING  
WITH ME, MOTHER NEAT?"  
YOUR BRIEFING IS WRONG!  
ALL WRONG! THEY'RE  
ARMED TO THE DAMN  
TEETH!"

"ALARM!-ALARM!  
YOU'VE BEEN  
STRUCK!"

"THINK I DON'T KNOW  
WHEN I'VE BEEN HIT,  
SEE ME? MY SUIT IS  
HOLDING AND HAS  
SEALED ITSELF, WHEN  
DO I REACH END TAG  
GET'S WAIT A MINUTE--  
WE HAVE A PROBLEM  
HERE... PODS ARE  
BREACHING, ENERGY  
BACK-FLOW BUILDING,  
COULD BE BIG TROUBLE  
--MAYBE I SHOULD  
ABORT--"

"NO TIME - WING LEADER  
I HAVE FINAL - EGGY  
AND MAIN-TARGET-  
COMING UP ON FLIGHT  
PLAN - ALPHA - BETA  
ALAN - SYSTEMS?"

"ALL WEAPONS  
SYSTEMS- **GREEN**..."

**"FIRE!"**



"I'VE GOT HIM! I'VE GOT HIM,  
MOTHER NEST, PULLING  
OUT."

"DOES THAT  
SATISFY  
YOU CREEPS?"

"STOW THE CRAP RED  
STEEL ONE. WE COPIED  
ALL. SEE ME UNIT IS  
STAYING BEHIND TO  
OBSERVE. YOUR DOGS  
HOLDING?"

"HAVE YOU IN SIGHT WING  
LEADER. APPROACH ON  
LINE 2-39Z"

"BARELY."

"HAVE COPIED, MOTHER NEST  
AND COMPLIED."

"IT'S BEEN A ROTTEN DAY. BOTH WINGS BLOWN  
AWAY. AND MOTHER NEST HAS BEEN COVERING  
UP LITTLE SECRETS AGAIN. THIS TIME IT ONLY  
"GAST ME A FINGER... NEXT TIME?"

"AND ALL FOR JUST A  
TECNO-SIMULATION TO TEST  
SOME DAMN THEORETICAL  
TACTICS. IN FACT, THE  
MORE I THINK ABOUT  
IT, THE MORE I WONDER  
IF I SHOULDN'T GET OUT  
OF THE TEST PILOT  
RACKET..."

"I'M NOT YOUNG  
ANYMORE..."

# How To Kill A ROBOT

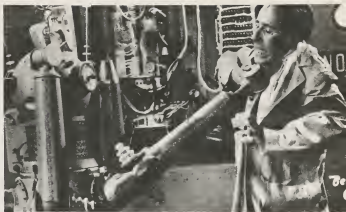


By Tom Rogers

Through the years, motion pictures sporting robots, androids and the like have offered some intriguing but, for the most part, disappointing methods of disposal for mechanical contrivances. Since 1926, robots have dripped their lubrication, and fallen to pieces through a variety of destructive techniques. Below is a brief chronological examination of the assaults upon "robotkind" in motion pictures. Needless to say, more varied successes were employed in television productions, but perhaps we'll deal with them at another time.

The evil (a standard, relative term, of course) robotrix of Fritz Lang's classic **Metropolis** [1926] met "her" end when the angry locals burned "her" synthetic flesh melted moments before the entire body was consumed.

Certain serial mechanoids, such as those found in **The Phantom Empire** [1935] and **The Undersea Kingdom** [1936], met their ends when somebody took a screwdriver to them. Whenever this unlikely event took place, the robots involved appeared, amazingly, to



Magog gets a grip on one of his creators in this scene from *Gog*.

lack innards. Like the leathermen of **Barbarella** [1968], which were blasted apart by rayguns, they seemed to be animated through magical, rather than logical, means. Actually, there was very little scientific plausibility in movie serials.

On the other hand, the eight-foot-tall metal star of **The Phantom Creeps** [1939], which was the all-time ugliest robot to ever have appeared in films, was shot and blown up as it tried to escape the scene of a crime. A car crash

took care of the Metalogen Man in **The Monster and the Ape** [1945], and raygun blasts destroyed the circuitry of the ridiculous robots [with hats, yet!] that endangered **Captain Video** [1951] and his Video Rangers.

Mother Riley, the transvestite "heroine" of **My Son, The Vampire** [1952], resorted to a rather crude approach while handling Bela Lugosi's droid: "she" punched it out and broke it. Similarly, when the axe-wielding mechanical contrivance

The Stormtroopers discover See-Threepio and Artoo-Detoo hidden aboard the Empire's Death Star.





of the **Zombies of the Stratosphere** [1952] attempted to slay Rocket Man, he turned the tables on the thing and smashed its control box. A subsequent serial, **The Mysterious Dr. Satan** [1952], had a bank-robbing tin man that accidentally killed its villainous creator and then tumbled from a cliff. Naturally, the accident-prone nasty was smashed on the rocks below, and the heroic Copperhead was able to round up the rest of the bad guys.

The ludicrous helmeted gorilla from outer space, **Robot Monster** [1953], was impervious to all Earth weapons. However, when the thing foolishly fell in love with the last young woman on the planet, its superior on the Moon decided to kill off his agent by destroy the entire sphere. Drastic, to be sure, but it did the trick.

Another menacing alien droid, which belonged to the **Devil Girl From Mars** [1954], proved to be indestructible until it and its mistress were pulverized when their spaceship blew up. **Gog** [1954] and its twin, **Magog**, were under the control of some unknown power throughout most

of the flick. At the conclusion, though, the letter was stopped by a flamethrower, and Gog ran out of steam when its unseen masters were zonked by air force jets. Elsewhere, the tall, deathray-equipped Venusian robots that made their **Target: Earth** [1954] were eliminated by high-frequency soundwaves. Along more humorous lines, the bumbling ceiling-scraper of **The Bowery Boys Meet the Monsters** [1955] kept losing its head because of low beams.

Bela Lugosi prepares to animate his *Phantom Creeps* robot for a night out on the town.



Yul Brenner played the android gunman in *Westworld*, a place where nothing could possibly go wrong.

This robot from Venus, on his *Target Earth*, menaces the hero and heroine. (Note cracked viewplate).





the biggest and baddest mechanoid in movie history, was an energy eater that met a spectacular end when its massive power was turned inward. This particular demise was caused by the most scientific anti-droid method in the cinema; usually, as we have already witnessed, the manner was rather unsophisticated. Another giant, the alien insectoid of **The Mysterians** (1957), caused a great deal of trouble for Japan until it stepped onto a booby

trapped bridge and tumbled into the water below.

South of the border, the Spanish **Robot VS. the Aztec Mummy** (1957) proved to be somewhat amusing. When all else failed, the fugitive from a gauze factory clashed with the evil tin man and ripped it apart. Thus, you should rush right out and purchase an immortal mummy — preferably Aztec in origin — just in case any diabolical droids happen to be lurking in the neighborhood. **The Colossus of**

**New York** (1958), another robot with a human brain, came equipped with a self-destruct button. Look for this sort of thing (quickly, I suggest) whenever you are confronted by murderous mechanoids.

A group of androids from Elsewhere bugged us in the **Planets Against Us** (1961), but this problem was resolved when a scientific device caused them to overload and melt from within. Conversely, one of Earth's better-behaved robots became troublesome during a **Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet** (1962), until an erupting volcano disposed of the thing. Talos, a Terran gargantuan of bronze that was propelled by the power of Greek gods, was deactivated when **Jason and the Argonauts** (1963) uncorked a heel and released the giant's life-giving liquid.

In **Voyage to the End of the Universe** (1963) **Starship Invasions** (1977), **Star Wars** (1977) and a few other flicks, rayguns (lasers, to be precise) proved the most effective against problem droids. In addition, the alien metal men of **The Earth Dies Screaming** (1964), became incapacitated

Here, Robby, the Robot promised

to turn Richard Eyer into *The In-*



The mad scientist Rotwang boasts of his creation, the Robotrix in this scene from *Metropolis*.



An extraterrestrial carries a *Captain Video* Ranger into a blazing inferno.



when: a) hit by a truck; b) their local power station was demolished. Other artificial outworlders, **The Human Duplicators** [1964], ended up destroying each other during a free-for-all.

Getting back to Earth-made robots, those in **The Time Travelers** [1964] were unable to resist physical brutality or fire for long. Back in the 20th century, the abysmal **Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster** [1965] concluded when the NASA robot committed suicide while explosively thwarting some extraterrestrials. A laser cannon blasted a hole in the disfigured android that went around killing people in **Castle of Evil** [1966], while a successful alteration of the past [our present] prevented the creation of **Cyborg 2087** [1966].

Should you ever want to stop a full-sized metal version of an out-sized gorilla, follow the example set in **King Kong Escapes** [1967], and cut off its power supply before hurling it from a gigantic tower. Meanwhile, most of the man-sized mechanical servants in **Mission Stardust** [1968] were zonked by machine gun bullets.



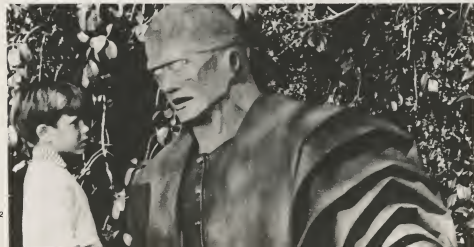
Peter Fonda makes friends with Clark, the android from *Futureworld*.

Four years later, the smallest evil robot in the cinema was squashed by a man's foot during a segment of **Asylum** [1972]. While on the subject of basic methods, nothing more than bullets and/or fire were needed to finish off the androids in both **Westworld** [1973] and **Futureworld** [1976]. Another Earth-type computer capable of independent thought and evil deeds, Proteus IV of **Demon Seed** [1977], met its match

when the plug was pulled. Finally, the robotic Minotaur of **Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger** was crushed beneath the heavy slab of a pyramid [all well and good, if you happen to be in Egypt or Hyperborea].

So there you have it. If your own robots get out of hand, or if you're ever around any unfriendly droids, try one or all, if necessary of these sure-fire [?] movie techniques for alleviating the problem. Don't hold your breath, though, as you wait for results .

*The Colossus of New York* has a chat with his son.





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Chandler's  
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that's right,  
the hero!!



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# BY THE RAY GUN'S RED GLARE



From their crude beginnings in the serials of the '30's, when they were made of wood, their death beams simple scratches on the film, to the '70's and Star Wars ultra-sophisticated blasters, the ray gun has remained one thing above all; deadly to those unfortunate enough to be on the business end.

By Allan Asherman

■ The horrifying figure comes closer, the shiny, metal barrel of its weapon pointing at its target. The ray-gun goes off; the target glitters, vanishes, slows down, freezes, melts, explodes or flies backward, depending upon which movie you're watching. Ray-guns are still inventions of the future, but they've been around for years in motion pictures. No self-respecting mad scientist or alien invader would dare to use an ordinary hand-gun in his battle with

the world. As a result, depending upon the requirements of its user and the budget of the movie or television episode, there has been an incredible variety of ray-guns created for the more hostile or aggressive science fiction personnel.

All science fiction film ray-guns have not been hand weapons; some would be more properly called **Ray Projectors**. An early short film, **The Crazy Ray** (produced in France), featured a beam that did weird things to the entire city of Paris, but the screen's first significant ray projector was seen in **Just Imagine** (Fox; 1930). Comedian El Brendel was revived from suspended animation with a huge laboratory apparatus made from metal, glass and whatever else was available to the film's art director. The central portion of the device was a long, gun-like barrel.

These stop-motion aliens are prepared to fire their *Laser Blast*.

A similar (but smaller) and more deadly device appeared in **The Mask of Fu Manchu** (MGM; 1932). Karloff, as the evil Doctor, used the wheeled, art-deco device which was prominently played up in the film's publicity stills.

The scientific city of Murania featured hand-sized ray-guns when cowboy Gene Autry and friends visited **The Phantom Empire** (Mascot serial; 1935), which featured colorful miniatures, gobs of gadgetry and little else besides Autry's singing cowboy routine. Ray rifles which resembled king-sized eggbeaters were leveled at our hero by horrible robots and Imperial guards. It was the beginning of an almost endless assortment of imaginative weaponry, powered by special effects animation.



*Commando Cody* (Judd Holdren) burns through the enemy spaceship's hull.



Captain Kirk tests his experimental phaser rifle in this *Star Trek* publicity photo.

**The Werewolf of London** (Universal; 1935) used a powerful device to project moonlight to nurture a rare flower. The Universal art department pasted fins, wires, springs and dummy switches onto an ordinary

spotlight to create the projector; they would later use the same trick to manufacture the "melting ray" of the first Flash Gordon serial.

More innovative designs appeared in Universal's extremely interesting science fiction thriller **The Invisible Ray** (1936). Scientist Janos Rukh [Boris Karloff] astounded the world

when he invented a projector that gathered and stored light rays that had left Earth centuries before. Unfortunately, Rukh used the device to pinpoint the landing site of a huge meteorite. Finding the radioactive remains of the



*Barbarella* points her pistol, prepared for danger.



heavenly visitor: Rukh's mind was poisoned by the "Radium X" and he was driven mad. One of his first acts was to construct a tripod-supported, heat ray projector. Later he made use of the same machine to restore his blind mother's eyesight, in an astounding display of laser surgery many years before the first, real laser was constructed.

Republic Pictures' special effects department created ray guns for their quicke [but imaginative] serial **Undersea Kingdom** [1936], in which the scientifically advanced inhabitants of Atlantis sought to dominate the Earth. Their ray-guns were round metal disks with attached handles, triggers and barrels. Because none of these movie props really worked, the rays themselves were [and still are] added with animation. Universal's advanced, special effects department had perfected the art of creating solid beams of light, but Republic's guns fired what appeared to be [and what probably were] scratches on the film's negative.

**Flash Gordon** [Universal; 1936] was supposedly the most expensive serial ever produced. Although few of the story's costumes and props resembled Alex Raymond's classic comic strip, the ray-guns looked somewhat like their original inspirations. The hand-guns and rifles of Ming's armies were constructed from wood painted to appear metallic. The serial also boasted the largest ray projector ever shown in the movies; the atom furnace in King Vultan's Sky City generated the radioactive, gravity-defying rays.

For **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars** [Universal; 1938], the serial hero journeyed to the Red Planet where he discovered Ming attempting to destroy the Earth by using a large ray projector called a "Nitron Lamp." Only a small portion of this huge weapon was ever really constructed; the remainder was an optical painting which included surrounding

buildings, as well as the large "lamp" itself. Smaller ray projectors in the Martian city of Queen Azura, projected "light bridges," beams of solid light used as walkways between buildings and launching platforms.

**Trip to Mars** also featured one of the most innovative, hand-weapon designs to appear in any movie. The traditional handgrip was replaced by a notched framework surrounding the gun's trigger. The weapon rested atop the hand of the gunman, making it easier to aim than a conventional gun. This prop, too, was constructed from wood, as were the more conventional guns in **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe** [Universal; 1940]. Cheaply superimposed animated smatterings of light did not help the

realism of this serial. Spaceman Buster Crabbe had much better weaponry when he temporarily assumed the identity of **Buck Rogers** [Universal; 1939]. Several different guns were created for Buck's friends and foes. The "Hidden City" scientists used traditional ray-gun designs that greatly resembled the expensive, toy ray-gun of the period. That toy is now a sought-after collectors' item; Steven Spielberg is reputed to have carried one around with him during the filming of **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**.

The hand-guns of Killer Kane's criminal legion resembled small, perforated metal disks with at-

Raquel Welch and Stephen Boyd use their laser rifle on their *Fantastic Voyage*.



tached handles, triggers, and barrel. The barrel was tipped with three small spheres. The Saturnians used ray-rifles similar to those seen in **Flash Gordon**. The most interesting thing about the **Buck Rogers** weapons were the optics used for their ray-blasts. Swirling patterns of light were carefully added to the beams, creating a black-and-white caricature of a laser beam.

**Dr. Cyclops** [Paramount; 1940] was a mad scientist who shunk animals using a ray projector powered by his own personal uranium mine. Running short of animals, "Cyclops" [his real name was Dr. Thorkel, played by noted character-actor, Albert Dekker turned the ray's full intensity on his assistant (actor Paul Fix), melting his face in a horrifying sequence that was censored [it was recently restored into some TV prints]. The ray later shrank an entire scientific expedition. Some died at the hands of the mad Doctor; the others regained their normal size. The design of the ray machine resembled a high-budget recreation of the instruments seen in **The Invisible Ray**.

Cyclops' ray returned the following year vastly expanded, because, this time, it didn't have to be built—just drawn—for the first of Paramount's 17 **Superman** cartoons. This time it was a death-ray, whose workings filled a huge tower-shaped laboratory, but failed to stop the Man of Steel.

**The Adventures of Captain Marvel** [Republic; 1941] brought the famous super-hero to the screen to recover the lenses of an ancient ray projector the power of which could turn rocks into gold. Its power was supernatural, and therefore, limitless. In one chapter the villainous Scorpion [the weapon was built in the image of this insect] used the machine to melt



an entire mountain [and that was only with **some** of the lenses in place!].

**Batman** [Columbia; 1943] included another low budget serial weapon—a "radium gun" that opened safes and blasted walls apart. A conglomeration of tubing and rings and other little details, it was a wonder the crooks could find the trigger.

**King of the Rocketmen** [Republic; 1949] also had a king-size ray projector, this time in the hands of "Dr. Vulcan" [no relation to Mr. Spock]. "King" [Tris Coffin] had a custom-made ray pistol [probably an ordinary prop pistol with added metal parts], which was modified and used by "Rocketmen" George Wallace [**Radar Men from the Moon**, Republic; 1951], Walter Reed [**Flying Disc Men from Mars**, Republic; 1950] and Judd Holdren [**Commando Cody, Sky Marshal of the Universe** TV series].

**Captain Video** existed first as the classic DuMont TV series starring Al Hodge, as "The Captain." His ray-guns looked better than most serial's weapons. Still made of wood, sometimes without any optical effects [TV production was live and *primitive* in those days], but always used imaginatively, the good Captain fought numerous space perils [such as the notorious Dr. Pauli and the beserk robot Tobor] and set the trend for every TV space-

man to come. Columbia Pictures produced a low-budget **Captain Video** serial in 1951, but it did not capture the charm of the series as Judd Holdren [who never could seem to escape rocketships in his serials] fought badman Gene Roth amid cardboard mockups of buildings and spaceships.

**Superman and the Mole-Men** [Lippert Pictures; 1951], the pilot for the **Superman TV series**, has been seen on the tube as **Unknown People** [the only 2-part series episode]. Believe-it-or-not, the ray-weapon here was a *vacuum cleaner*, with attached handles and inserted optical effects [which were not as economical as the weapon itself]. The Superman series itself sometimes featured nifty ray weapons, such as the nose of a robot in *The Runaway Robot*, and an incredibly cheap wooden mockup of a gun that fired clouds of smoke in *Blackmail*. The serial Superman, too, had come up against ray projectors. In **Atom-Man Vs. Superman** [Columbia; 1950], Luthor [Lyle Talbot] sent Superman [Kirk Alyn] into the "Phantom Zone" with his special device.

Meanwhile, back on the moors, **The Man from Planet X** was on the prowl with his little ray pistol that never did anything in this interesting little film.

By this time, spacemen were



Jerry Farman and his ray rifle, on the *Forbidden Planet*.

appearing by the droves on television. **Tom Corbett: Space Cadet** and **Space Patrol** both seem to have debuted in 1952. It's a toss-up as to which was the cheapest to produce, but **Space Patrol** had the better scripts; these unfortunately did not help improve the everpresent wooden ray-guns, still looking like they were serial leftovers (and perhaps they were).

**Rocky Jones: Space Ranger** also began in 1952, with some of the best hardware ever seen on television until that time. The rockets, buildings and guns were all art deco—beautifully designed wood and metal mockups.

Not so credible were the weapons used in **Flash Gordon**, a cheapie effort of a TV series produced in West Germany. Flash's television weapons were of uninspirational design. Accompanied by weird sound-effects, these guns literally caused people to "freeze," to stand perfectly rigid until "unzapped" by another shot accompanied by the same sound-effect played backwards.

Designer Al Nozaki's beautiful, Martian war machines in **War of the Worlds** [Paramount; 1953] included cobra-necked

heat ray projectors, and wing-tip disintegrating rays. Electronic sound-effects, plus some of the most beautifully conceived animation effects of all time, made these devices work very efficiently. The imaginative photography and Technicolor textures also helped to make this a perfect film with great ray-blasts. The work was similar to the high-budgeted ray blasts seen in **This Island Earth** [Universal; 1955], which included Technicolor explosions.

**Invaders from Mars** [20th Century-Fox; 1953] provided 3-D, color blasts from Martian ray guns that turned rock into bubbling puddles and probably would have done the same to humans (or mutants).

**It Came From Outer Space** [Universal; 1953] was a classy black-and-white 3-D entry that had an especially effective sequence in which hero Richard Carlson was almost cut in two by a zig-zagging (animated) ray fired at him by an alien in a cave. Careful timing combined the animation with on-set, special-effects to cause a rock wall to be blasted to smithereens before everyone's eyes. It was every bit as frightening as the heat rays that came from the single eye of the huge robot, Gort, in the classic **The Day the Earth Stood Still** [20th Century-Fox; 1951], and much more frightening than the effects implied in **Target Earth** [Allied Artists; 1954], which also had rays emanating from single-eyed robots.

Walt Disney's **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea** [Buena Vista; 1954] showed the legendary Captain Nemo using special underwater guns that fired electrical charges without frying the gunman. Variations of the same weapons also showed up in **The Mysterious Island** [Columbia; 1961].

**Earth Vs. The Flying Saucers** [Columbia; 1956] provided interesting animated ray blasts that produced more low-

budget heat rays, shimmering and vanishing effects.

There is nothing low-budget about **Forbidden Planet** [MGM; 1956], a film which gave us many beautiful thrills including sidearms, rifles and cannons that fired disintegrating rays. These props were built with metal bodies and clear, plastic tips rendered operative by animation that has yet to be surpassed. The laser cannon in the first **Star Trek** pilot is very reminiscent of the **Forbidden Planet** device, except that its sound effect was more pronounced (the **Planet** sounds were understated, hot little noises). The **Forbidden Planet** guns also turned up in other films, including the awful **Queen of Outer Space** [Allied Artists; 1958], and numerous episodes of **The Twilight Zone** television series.

The alien in **I Married a Monster from Outer Space** [Paramount; 1958] fired his ray-blasts from his sleeve—like the suited aliens of **Earth Vs. The Flying Saucers**. The **I Married** monster also used the same sound-effects from **War of the**

Flash Gordon has vengeance on his mind as he hefts a Martian ray gun, in *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars*.







Prince Tallen (Philip Ahn), Capt. Lasca (Henry Brandon) and a Saturnian stuntman (Dave Sharp) await the arrival of *Buck Rogers*.

**Worlds** that would also later show up in *Star Trek*.

The less said about *The Angry Red Planet* (A.I.P.; 1959) and *Teenagers from Outer Space* the better, but they *did* both have ray-guns. *The Teenagers* used a toy that was actually being sold in stores at the time the film was being shown. At least the European-made *Journey to the 7th Planet* (A.I.P.; 1960) had custom-built ray rifles, as did the interesting economy-minded *The Time Travellers* (A.I.P.; 1964).

*Atlantis: The Lost Continent* (MGM; 1961) featured a huge, ray-firing crystal projector. Mounted on a wheeled, pivoted platform, it was a primitive "laser-type" weapon that turned

people into skeletons and boiled water as the island continent breathed its last.

The high-budget *Fantastic Voyage* (20th Century-Fox; 1966) featured a modern-day laser rifle along with the thousands of plastic bags that were supposed to resemble the interior of a human body. *Barbarella* (Paramount; 1968) also came in contact with ray-guns, and proved to be an expert shot.

Some television series had original ray guns created for them. *The Outer Limits* (United Artists TV) featured pistols, rifles, necklaces and eyeballs that fired deadly blasts of animated overlays. Some of these weapons were designed by the special-effects experts at Project Unlimited (including Jim Danforth and Wah Chang). *The Invaders* (Quinn Martin Productions) used more simplistic hand-guns to disintegrate cars,

buildings and whatever [or whoever] else got in their way. The designers at 20th Century-Fox TV let their minds run rampant while designing the flashy guns for the Robinson family of *Lost in Space*.

Designers James Rugg, Matt Jefferies and Wah Chang (uncredited) worked to produce the wonders seen in *Star Trek's* arsenal. The laser pistols and cannon designed for the first two episodes of *The Cage* and *Where No Man Has Gone Before* disappeared and were replaced by the more compact "phasers." The beautiful phaser rifle featured in *Where No Man* was supposed to have been featured in the rest of the series, but it was never used although the revised, *Star Trek* Writer's Guides discuss its capability to be used together with a hand phaser and a "phaser two" (pistol grip) as a power booster.

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# FUTURE FANTASY

(Continued from page 17)

and at least one "bigfoot." Lots of luck, Dave.

Ever since Arthur Conan Doyle created his immortal consulting detective, the general public has been in love with the character's exploits. There have been a multitude of radio programs, TV shows, movies and whatnot about him, and the list is still growing. Newest among the films is Avco Embassy's forthcoming **Sherlock Holmes: Murder by Decree**, starring Christopher Plummer, James Mason, Donald Sutherland, Genevieve Bujold, and Anthony Quayle. Rene Dupont and Bob Clark are co-producing, and the latter is directing the script by John Hopkins. Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?

**The Shining**, about a boy with advanced psychokinetic abilities, is being filmed in London for Warner Bros. Stanley Kubrick is producing, directing, and has done the screenplay based on the highly popular novel. Jack Nicholson, Shelley Duvall, Scatman Crothers, and Danny Lloyd are cast in leading roles.

A film that might very well be considered by some to be a remake of the abysmal **Horror of Party Beach** is **Slithis**, which comes to us by way of an independent producer. This deals with a mutated lifeform that is created by a radiation leak at an atomic power plant. This carnivorous thing is formed underwater, and the misshapen humanoid has the ability to live within its natural environment or out of it. When it exhausts the local supply of seafood, it comes out onto the land and begins eating animals and — people, naturally. A reporter and some friends track down the walking sponge, and then the fungus really flies.

Not one, but **two** movies about **Superman** are on the way! As with **The Three** and **Four Musketeers**, the ultra-

hero epic will be a multi-parter, and it is chockful of fantastic effects. Warner Bros. is making the flicks, which are, of course, about DC's most popular character. As in the case of nearly all adaptations, the origin will be updated, and considerably different, from the original concept. Nonetheless, it promises to be intriguing, interesting and entertaining. In addition to the **Man of Steel** [played by Christopher Reeve], we will be treated to scenes on Krypton, in the Fortress of Solitude, in and over Metropolis [actually, New York], and elsewhere. Lex Luthor [Gene Hackman] and three Phantom Zone criminals will also turn up for an incredible slug-fest over the United States. Also featured in the cast are Marlon Brando as Jor-El, Margot Kidder as Lois Lane, Susannah York as Lara-El, Terence Stamp as evil General Zod, Trevor Howard, Harry Andrews, and many more. Ilya Salikind and Pierre Spengler, the producers, are having Richard Donner direct the screenplay by Mario Puzo, Robert Benton, and David and Leslie Newman; visual effects are being handled by Wally Veevers, Colin Chilvers, Les Bowie, and Roy Field. Watch for the first part in December.

Fairly frequently, porno science-fiction movies are released to a select group of theaters throughout the country. One such flick is **2089: A Sex Odyssey**, which was written by Willie Pribil, directed by George Keil, and produced by Gunther Kopf. This effort from Burbank International Pictures stars Alena Penz, Nina Fredric, Gerti Sneider, Raul Retzer, and Cathrene Conti. In brief, the storyline concerns five beautiful astronauts who travel from Venus to Earth in a U.F.D. They are here to obtain certain chemical substances so that their race — which consists only of women — will be able to reproduce and survive. Upon landing in the Bavarian Alps, they decide to go among the un-

suspecting populace. One by one, the females come to the conclusion that they are having far too much fun to leave, so ultimately the ship is abandoned — perhaps forever. Back on their homeworld, another research team is being prepared — but, considering what happened to the previous group, it isn't at all surprising that they will not be going to Earth.

The newest fantasy flick from England's EMI Studios is **Warlords of Atlantis** [formerly called **7 Cities to Atlantis**], which Columbia will be unleashing on the U.S. in a short time. As with **The Land That Time Forgot**, **The People That Time Forgot**, and **At the Earth's Core**, this stars Doug McClure as an adventurer who gets involved with a horde of laughable "monsters." Not only that, but actual descendants of lost Atlantis — which, according to this version, was founded by extraterrestrials — add more flavor to the story. There are giant sea creatures, living robots [courtesy of mind-control units], gilled humans, Zaargs, and a few other goodies to amuse the audience. Other players include Peter Gilmore, Cyd Charisse, Daniel Massey and Lea Brodie. The screenplay by Brian Hayles was directed by Kevin Connor and produced by John Dark. While the special effects are of questionable quality, some of us can live with them because of distractions via buxom actresses like Ms. Brodie. Who could ask for anything more?

Richard Adams' terrific best-selling novel, **Watership Down**, will soon be issued as a feature-length cartoon from Avco Embassy. The touching tale of a group of intelligent rabbits [one of whom is clairvoyant] was produced, written, and directed by Martin Rosen in England. Voiceovers were provided by such distinguished people as Sir Ralph Richardson, Zero Mostel, John Hurt, Richard Briers, Michael Graham-Cox, and John Bennett. In all honesty, this is a fine pro-

duction, both in script and in excellent animation; I have seen it already, and I can say that more than one critic in the audience shed a tear at the ending, and that's tough to do where cartoon bunnies are concerned. Try it.

Stirling Silliphant has written the screenplay for **The Weather War**, which is a contemporary of adventure with a self-explanatory plot. This movie will be made by Universal, with Gary Mehman and Alan Bernard as co-producers, and Carl Foreman overseeing as executive producer.

Lots more to come. Stay tuned. •

## WALT DISNEY

(Continued from page 40)

showed the progress that had been made toward space flight [particularly the launching of the Russian Sputnik and the American Explorer vehicles] and went forward to show the practical applications of space flight.

Through animation and live action, we were shown the possible uses of future space stations for weather control, pure research, medical research, and the prevention of war. All in all, it was a fitting close to an amazingly prophetic series.

The same year, 1959, the Disney people, in association with the Abraham and Strauss store chain, did a special presentation of the wonders of space travel for young people. The A&S folks supplied store space for an extensive display of past and future space vehicles and hardware, the Disney people supplied film (taken from TV shorts), and lectures by Willey Ley. The program was highly successful.

By the 1960's, with the race to the moon in full swing, and TV hours devoted to the adventures of Elfego Baca and Texas John

Slaughter, Disney SF returned to the screen. **Moon Pilot** [1961] was the story of man's first journey to the satellite, done in comical style for the young audience.

Capt. Richard Talbot (Tom Tryon; later to become a best-selling author), was the U.S.'s first volunteer space pilot [joining up when a moon chimp sticks him with a dinner fork]. Preparing for the mission, he takes a short leave to say farewell to the folks at home. On the way there he meets a girl, Lyrae (Dany Saval) who knows all about the top secret mission.

Being a red-blooded American hero, Talbot reports her to the FBI, but that august organization is unable to find her and puts Talbot under lock and key for "his own safety." Even here, she manages to see him, and now tells him she's an alien, an inhabitant of Beta Lyrae and only wants to help him.

Finally, convinced and rapidly falling in love, Talbot sneaks out of the hotel and meets with the girl, but his disappearance causes a major confrontation between the Air Force and the FBI about what, and who, should be kept secret.

Talbot is finally located, and blasts off as scheduled. Once in space, however, Lyrae appears in the cabin, and the two, soon to be married, begin to sing a happy song about Beta Lyrae—much to the consternation of the Air Force brass listening in.

**Moon Pilot** is symptomatic of the Disney SF yet to come. Light-hearted (and somewhat light-headed), the emphasis is on comedy and a gentle spoof of the hardhats of the Air Force and the FBI. This less than serious treatment of SF was to continue for the rest of the Disney company's involvement in the genre.

In **The Absent Minded Professor**, Prof. Ned Brainard accidentally invents a miracle material he calls "flubber," which negates the force of gravity. With typical aplomb, he affixes the stuff to his Model T Ford and

tries to make Washington understand the importance of his find.

But, as usual, the bigwigs are too busy to be bothered, and by the time the military gets wind of the invention, it has been stolen by an unscrupulous neighbor of the professor's. Made to look foolish in front of the military, the professor manages to regain the real flying car, and flies it directly to Washington where he is, understandably, treated as a UFO and fired upon. Finally though, he manages to land, and the Army, Navy, and Air Force happily receive him as a hero.

Again, the Disney company has reduced a true, SF idea [an anti-gravity device] into an object of fun, and again they have used it to poke fun at the politicians and military—truly a trend.

With **Son of Flubber**, the Disney folks made their first sequel, and they picked the wrong subject with which to do it. Prof. Brainard returns, this time working on a special "dry rain" that will increase the size of plants—something much desired in a starving world. Meanwhile, his assistant, Biff Hawk (son of the villainous Alonzo Hawk) has developed a "flubbergas" from the professor's original invention, which he uses to help the local college football team win "the big game."

All of this tomfoolery gets the professor in trouble, and he is finally dragged into court where he manages to explain everything and lead us into a happy ending.

**Son of Flubber**, though boasting a rather funny aerial football game, fails as a film because it lacks a story. The whole movie is simply a mish-mash of sub plots rolled together and cut to 100 minutes. Again the Disney predilection for poking fun at the establishment, and failing to take science seriously, shows through. But this is only the beginning.

**The Misadventures of Merlin Jones** is the next Disney sci fi epic. Detailing the exploits of a brainy college student as he

uses his newfound powers of telepathy and hypnosis to get himself in trouble, the film is neither funny nor interesting. It does, in fact, more resemble two television stories put back to back than a real honest-to-Disney movie—but wait, there's more.

"The Monkey's Uncle" is a sequel to the above-mentioned Merlin Jones. In this one, Merlin must: first use techniques of sleep learning he has used on a monkey to teach two dummies all they need to pass their exams and stay on the school football team. And then, he must fly (motorless) to secure a million dollar bequest to the school which will otherwise have to cancel their football program.

Again the plots are foolish and thin, and now, the emphasis on sports over everything is becoming repetitious. But the end was not yet in sight.

**The Love Bug** and its various sequels look more and more like feature of TV's **My Mother the Car**. In these turkeys, a volkswagon named Herbie, which has a personality, is instrumental in winning various races; foiling various villains, and keeping Dean Jones and his amour of the moment together. The less said about these, the better.

**Escape to Witch Mountain**, and its sequel, **Return to Witch Mountain** are a little better. These films, documenting the adventures of two young aliens living on earth and their difficulties with greedy and voracious humanity are saved only by generally superior special effects and decent performances by such people as Bette Davis, Christopher Lee, and young Ike Eisenmann who was one of the high-points of the atrocious TV'er **Fantastic Journey**.

Finally, Disney has released, **The Cat From Outer Space**. An epic film about an alien cat who lands on Earth and then must convince Ken Berry and Maclean Stevenson to help him regain his flying saucer from the military and repair it so he can

resume his interrupted journey. His ability to use telepathically is a big help, but nothing can help the film.

Unfortunately, this is the extent of the Disney SF to the moment. The TV show has never really returned to Tomorrowland after those three remarkable journeys in the fifties, but the real Tomorrowland, in Disneyland and Disney World has moved forward. The opening of Space Mountain in 1972 underlined the Disney interest in the genre, and plans for a giant voyage ride spotlighting Jules Verne's books are in the works.

Disney studios is also working on a new Sci-fi adventure tentatively called, **Space Platforms**, a live action epic set in the near future. One can hope that the craftsmen will return to the quality of **Man Into Space**, and not try to regale us with more of the trash of the last few years. In any case, perhaps the existence of such shows as **Man Into Space**, **Mars and Beyond**, and **Eyes in Outer Space** will lead a new generation of Americans into other domains not dreamed of by Disney in 1954. One can only hope so. \*

## THEY CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA

(Continued from page 27)

this area come with a somewhat smaller creature . . .

Universal had found in the past that they did very well with series pictures featuring man-monsters such as Frankenstein, the Mummy, and the Wolf Man. Not surprisingly their bid for a science-fiction monster series involved a new man-monster (in other words, a guy in a suit). This was **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**, supposedly a prehistoric link between man and marine life. This preposterous premise is never gone into very deeply; instead, a series of thrilling adventures keep the film

moving at a lively pace. While the creature occasionally ventures out of the water, the film's most memorable sequences are shot underwater. In these scenes, the aesthetics of almost ballet-like swimming are contrasted with the horrors of savage violence. The creature is made slightly sympathetic to audiences by the fact that it is his domain that man is invading, and not vice versa; and the creature's fascination for leading lady Julia Adams might be totally illogical, but nonetheless "commercial." Apparently director Jack Arnold felt that, with these "redeeming" qualities, the creature had enough abilities to get away with any sort of anti-social behavior. And does he! Considering how small the film's cast is, a significant number of characters wind up maimed or dead before the creature himself is shot repeatedly and returns to the Black Lagoon, apparently to die in his own world. But, maybe not.

**THE REVENGE OF THE CREATURE** was perpetrated in 1955, a single year after the gilled horror was created. This time out, the creature is even more violent than when he was in his home environment. After he is captured and put on exhibition in a Florida marina, he escapes and goes on a virtual orgy of destruction, both of life and property. Eventually he winds up floating off in the Everglades after being shot an enormous number of times. Still, he was back on schedule a year later for **THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US**, with John Sherwood replacing Jack Arnold as director. While Ben Chapman and Ricou Browning had played the aquatic creature in the first two films [Browning also plays the creature in the Florida Everglades section of this film]. This time, Don Megowan took over the title role in mid-film. The reason for the change is that, in this film, the creature is burned severely and loses his outer layer of skin, along with his gills.

Another creature, more manlike and with lungs, lurks underneath.

While the creature may have given up his aquatic ways, cheapie-quickie producers were impressed enough with his performances (at the box office, that is) to ensure that the seas did not remain safe—at least onscreen. Kent Taylor battled the radioactive **PHANTOM FROM 10,000 LEAGUES** to get at a sunken treasure in the remarkably forgettable film of the same name. **THE SHE-CREATURE** was a prehistoric, usually invisible spirit summoned up by hypnotist Chester Morris. Needless to say, this creature had murder on its mind and got what it wanted. But a she-creature as a sea creature? Yes, because, like **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**, **THE SHE-CREATURE** was purportedly some sort of prehistoric seagoing early form of man, and her spirit invariably struck on a beach conveniently located near the homes of all the film's characters. **THE SHE-CREATURE** was later remade by Larry (ZONTAR, *THE THING FROM VENUS*) Buchanan for direct sale to television.

Universal make-up man Jack Kevan was responsible for **THE MONSTER OF PIEORAS BLANCAS**, another Black Lagoon-inspired creature terrorizing a sparsely populated seacoast in this super-cheap 1958 independent production. The film's most enjoyable sequence depicted the monster strolling around with the head of one of its victims, holding the head as though it were a woman's purse.

In the 1960's the **STING OF DEATH** was given by a ludicrous jellyfish-man in the Florida Everglades. Once again, audiences were "treated" to amateur-level acting and nonexistent production values, this time courtesy of a Florida-based independent production outfit. **OC-TAMAN** [1970's] offered slightly more professional chills,

with Kerwin Mathews battling an indescribable monster assembled by Rick Baker [this was his first film] from parts of earlier movie-monster costumes!

**THE AMPHIBIAN MAN** was not another Black Lagoon imitation, but a 1960 Russian film originally announced as **TARZAN OF THE SEAS** (until Sy Weintraub, owner of the Tarzan film rights, stepped in). Actually, **THE AMPHIBIAN MAN** looks today very much like an early version of TV's *Man From Atlantis*.

Less human creatures also followed in the wake of **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**. **THE ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES** in the late fifties provided more laughs than chills, but several years later **THE FLESH EATERS** offered nauseating gore between the unintentional laughs. The title characters of this mini-epic were tiny organisms developed on a remote island by mad scientist Martin Kosleck. Not until the Canadian **THEY CAME FROM WITHIN** would the screen offer anything quite as revolting as the footage of **THE FLESH EATERS** enjoying a live meal.

Of course, the greatest sea monster of the 1970's appeared in Steven Spielberg's instant classic, **JAWS**. While not strictly science fiction, **JAWS** relied heavily for its effects on the science-fiction films of the 1950's, as well as on the horror films of all periods. **JAWS** was so successful that it inspired both a sequel and a host of imitations.

The first and most famous of the **JAWS** "ripoffs" was **ORCA**, a film doomed to unfavorable critical response because of the hostility to producer Dino de Laurentiis and the film's basic plotline. Prepared for a straight imitation of **JAWS**, critics were confounded when confronted by a film of a totally different nature. Their response was to attack **ORCA** for approaching its subject matter in a totally different manner than

**JAWS** had! Along the way, they failed to appreciate that the film was a sort of Greek tragedy inverting the story of "Moby Dick". Instead of being a fish like the monstrous shark of **JAWS**, **ORCA** was a killer whale, a highly intelligent sea mammal. Using this distinction as its main jumping off point, **ORCA** presented its tale from the point of view of the monster rather than the victims. This approach paid off by providing sequences such as the beautifully filmed funeral procession of whales guiding the "corpse" out of the water and onto the seashore.

More worthy of derision was **TENTACLES**, a **JAWS**-style tale of a giant octopus. To add insult to injury, the octopus is finally dispatched by trained killer whales, summoning up images of both **ORCA** and Mike Nichols' **OAY OF THE OOLPHIN**.

When **JAWS 2** finally arrived, it turned out to concern another, larger, meaner (and less convincing) Great White Shark than in the first film. Structure and characterization were virtually ignored in the effort to cram in as many grisly killings as possible.

However well or poorly-made, sea monster tales are big box office hits these days. Next on the horizon may be the long-awaited multimillion dollar Hammer/Toho Production of **NESSIE**, which has been ballyhooed for years as the last word on the Loch Ness Monster. Of course, if the film is a hit, other producers are certain to have their cinematic say on the subject. And so it goes. . .

## THE MAN BEHIND JAWS 2:

(Continued from page 31)

wanted it. He was also supposed to direct it, but then Paramount brought in Roman Polanski. Even so, there was a lot of Bill Castle's input in that picture. When it was released, though, it became totally Polanski's film, and Bill was never given any recognition at all. I know from talking to peo-

ple who were involved with the movie that Bill had quite a bit more to do with it than he was ever given credit for. He certainly had more flair than any of the studios, because they all turned it down. Nevertheless, everybody behaved as if his only contribution was buying the book, and that hurt him a lot.

**Swires:** Castle never had a very respectable reputation as a filmmaker. Did you have any misgivings about working for him?

**Swarc:** No—none at all. I met him because he was looking for fantasy material. When I first got to Hollywood I was going around trying to get people interested in science fiction. I had an idea for a picture, which was a space opera that was very close to what *Star Wars* turned out to be, but nobody was interested in it. There was also a book by Poul Anderson which dealt with a time patrol that Bill was interested in doing as a series. It never got off the ground, but we still kept in touch. Then he sent me the script for *Bug* which was actually very funny to read, because it was about intelligent cockroaches. He asked me what I thought of it, and I said: "This is either going to be the most laughable picture in history, or, if we can pull it off, it will really be something." So I decided to do it.

**Swires:** How was he to work for?

**Swarc:** He was a terrific producer. He was always there on the set, but he never interfered with the way I was doing the picture. He was very supportive, and he had the rarest quality of all. There are a lot of brilliant and intelligent people in this business, but very few of them have any common sense. Bill had enormous common sense. Also, he was not an intellectual snob.

**Swires:** Considering that Castle was a master of promotion, I was surprised that *Bug* had such limited release in the United States.

**Swarc:** It was a very difficult picture to make, and was done for two shoe-strings and four

laces. When it was finished Bill took it to Frank Yablans, who was the head of Paramount at that time. He flipped over it, but a week later he resigned and there was a change in management at Paramount, so the picture was sort of semi-buried. Then it was invited to the Fantasy and Science Fiction Film Festival in Paris, where it won first prize. Paramount finally decided to give it some sort of American distribution, but then removed the original title, which was "The Hephæstus Plague," and called it "Bug," which was a horrible title. They handled it as if it were strictly an exploitation picture, which it wasn't. At least it did very well in Europe.

**Swires:** I was disappointed that you had to wait until *Jaws 2* to get another feature film assignment, and even then only as an emergency replacement. The original director was John Hancock, whose best known films are *Bang The Drum Slowly* and *Baby Blue Marine* both of which are very romantic and sentimental. Why did the producers Richard Zanuck and David Brown select him to handle an action film like *Jaws 2*?

**Swarc:** They picked him because of his first feature, a low budget horror film called *Let's Scare Jessica To Death*. He prepared *Jaws 2* for ten months and shot for four weeks, and then they shut down.

**Swires:** Why was Hancock replaced?

**Swarc:** I wasn't there, so I'm not absolutely sure what happened. My understanding is that it was a mutual agreement. *Jaws 2* was much more difficult than the first one in terms of logistics and technical problems. What the shark had to do was very complicated. There were seven sailboats instead of one motorboat. The island was a set. Two-thirds of the movie took place on the ocean. Maybe Hancock eventually realized what he had gotten himself into, became discouraged, and said to himself: "I don't want to spend a year on this, do-

ing blackboards at night showing where I want the boats anchored, and being at the mercy of the ocean." It was really a nightmare. As a matter of fact, a lot of people at Universal thought that the picture could never be done.

**Swires:** What did Hancock shoot?

**Swarc:** He didn't shoot anything with the shark. All he shot were dialogue scenes.

**Swires:** Did you retain any of his footage?

**Swarc:** About a minute-and-a-half's worth—the scene of the kid on the sail boat who went flying on the spinnaker. And that was actually shot by his second unit.

**Swires:** What was wrong with the Dorothy Tristan-Howard Sackler screenplay that necessitated a re-write by Carl Gottlieb, who also re-wrote *Jaws*?

**Swarc:** It was just awful, and didn't work at all. The kids all sounded like a Hollywood person's idea of what young people are like. They were all plastic and had no identities. Also there was no really classic suspense.

**Swires:** To be perfectly honest I found *Jaws 2* to be rather dull. It seemed to me to be more of a remake than a sequel, because instead of anything new happening it was just more of the same.

**Swarc:** If there had never been a *Jaws* I'm sure everybody would look at *Jaws 2* differently, especially if *Jaws* had not been such a phenomenal success. I loved *Jaws*, but most of my film buff friends hated it. There's a bag that many people get into, that: a) if a film is successful, it's bad; and b) if a film is boring, it's artistic. I believe that the worst cardinal sin for a film is to be boring.

People try to judge *Jaws 2* for what it isn't rather than for what it is. It's as if you order a hamburger and french fries, and you get a chef who wants to turn it into haute cuisine. I don't care how many beautiful plates you serve it on, or how much beautiful silverware you eat it

with, or what kind of terrific sauce you pour on it—it's still a hamburger and french fries. — **Jaws 2** is a hamburger and french fries. •

## GIRLS OF GALACTICA

(Continued from page 21)

The role of the boss' daughter, on the successful **Lou Grant** show led to her guest spot in *Galactica*. A sociolator is a kind of specialized futuristic "lady of the evening," but one who has medical, as well as "other" duties. Laurette brings a sense of humor to the role, and her scenes with the overmatched Lt. Starbuck are a joy to watch.

Finally, faced with the sheer terror of the secret of the Ovions, Laurette shows her true mettle filling the audience with dread and tension as her fate remains unclear. She is, unfortunately, only a guest star, and we can only hope that this star will come out again in future episodes.

The third of the *Galactica* ladies is lovely Jane Seymour, who is no stranger to fantasy. After a brief career in British TV, Jane landed the pivotal role of Solitaire in the James Bond smash, **Live and Let Die**. Solitaire, a child-woman with extraordinary psychic powers gave Jane a fine chance to show her talents to worldwide audiences, and many offers followed.

In **Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger**, Jane played Princess Farrah, the beloved of Captain Sinbad and the cause of the quest for the secrets of the Arispani. Jane's presence on the voyage is necessary for the control of her transformed brother, and her seemingly nude presence beside an inland brook is necessary for the taming of the Trog, one of Ray Harryhausen's more successful creatures.

Following a succession of classy TV movies both here and abroad, Jane found herself in the

burgeoning cast for **Battlestar Galactica**. As Serina, a TV commentator from one of the home colonies, she gives a voice to the disbelief of the colonials over the Cylon attack. Later, she stands as the voice of reason in an angry mob. Finally, she is a symbol of both womanhood and motherhood in a world turned upside down.

Her gentleness and love to both her young son Boxey and the loyal (and smitten) Capt. Apollo give a sense of humanity to *Galactica*—one that would be sorely lacking without her.

Of course, these are not the only ladies of the *Battlestar*. The ragtag fleet surrounding the mammoth engine of war is full of refugees from a destroyed civilization and many of them get their moments in the series.

Dancing girls, gamblers, innocent vacationers, all appear on the sinister planet of the Ovions. In the future, more of these distractions will appear on the TV screen, many of them to have a brief affair with our series regulars—many to appear as rivals to the fair Athena. In any case, as long as the *Battlestar Galactica* sails the cosmic seas, there will be the Girls of *Galactica* flying high with it. ●

## BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

(Continued from page 11)

"to cover with protective material."

Serina (Jane Seymour) is the sensuous Caprican news commentator. A "sirene" is (among other, more insidious things) "a charming, alluring or enticing woman" such as the type that tried to lure Odysseus away from his appointed path. Apollo Adama would probably enjoy being compared to Odysseus.

Cassiopeia (a practitioner of the galaxy's oldest profession) was, in addition to being the name of a constellation, also the wife of an ancient King of Ethiopia.

Some of the other character names of the *Galactica* crew are more obvious in their derivations. Starbuck (Dirk Benedict) was also the first mate of the vessel that hunted the "Moby Dick." Boomer (Herb Jefferson, Jr.) is not an overly introverted fellow. "Daggit" is derived from "Doggie," while other character and location names are based upon astrological terms, or mythological names.

If a story is going to take you through the vastness of space, what could be more natural than naming people and places with astrological type-casting? "Cassiopeia" the constellation and "Apollo" who drives his chariot of the Gods through space are the people involved. "Caprica" (Adama's home planet), Tauron and "Scorpio" are planets. "Sagittaria" was the destroyed planet that overestimated its defenses. The "Solaria" was the last *Battlestar* to be destroyed, and "solium" ["Sol meaning Sun or just as hot as same] is a powerful fuel. The "Rising Star" is one of the *Galactica*'s spacecraft, and there are edibles such as "Aquarian Ambrosia Cake" and the reknowned "Sagittarian Straight."

"Gemons" are natives of the planet Gemini, and are the closest things to Vulcans we'll probably see on **Battlestar Galactica**. They have deadpan expressions, have no senses of humor and play cards flawlessly (as Starbuck discovers unhappily). There are other aliens, far less humanoid and Much less friendly, who are more important to the framework of *Galactica*.

On the planet Carillon we encounter the Ovions, a race of four-armed insect-beings who keep orderly nests, thrive on captured and hopeless enemies (humans). Seetol, the Ovion handmaiden, lays down her life for her Queen Lotay without a moment's hesitation. If analogies are to be drawn between sets of "bad guys," the Ovions are probably counterparts of the Romulans of **Star Trek**.

We probably won't be seeing Oivons too often, unless some of the problems involved in their production and presentation can be worked out. The key problem is the two sets of arms; complex prosthetics based upon designs for artificial arms that are currently in experimental use in certain hospitals. The extra arms are probably remotely controlled, and they seem to be having more problems with them than **The Bionic Woman** first had with her own mechanical limbs.

The Oivons are only the "second bananas" when it comes to villainy. The real baddies are the Cylons.

It is to the credit of the **Battlestar Galactica** writers that an attempt is made to justify the position of the Cylons from their standpoint. Their prime concern is to maintain order in the universe. Humans, they believe, are not only a threat to that natural order, but will one day cause the universe to collapse; unless, of course, they are eliminated first. Here, we have a clear case of turnabout where intelligent insect-beings regard humans as "pests" to be exterminated.

The Cylons are proud creatures. Their command title translates into English as "Imperious Leader". They are capable of having as many as three brains, all of which must be artificially introduced into their bodies at the appropriate times. Not every Cylon gets all three; the implanting of the first brain is accompanied by tests for "Third Brain" (command) potential.

Visually, the Cylons are a multitude of Darth Vaders. Covered in heavy armored spacesuits, their horrifying appearance is made even more horrifying by concealing it just as Vader's suit concealed his.

Curiously, Cylon philosophy is not evil because the Cylons do not possess the concepts of right and wrong; there is simply order and disorder to their way of thinking.

The scenario of **Battlestar**

**Galactica** has all the ingredients of a winner, and the episodes we have seen thus far appear to be preserving the essential quality characteristics of the first installment. It must be remembered, however, that time and money for the series is proportionately much less than it was for the pre-sold pilot. There is also something else to consider.

The technical personnel working on **Battlestar Galactica** are highly skilled; the best in their fields, in some cases. As such, they are in demand and they also possess a dislike for remaining in one place too long. John Dykstra has other tentative commitments in the works; Universal is covering itself by establishing its own in-house special-effects installation to function as a counterpart to IL&M if the need should arise.

Artists who have worked on the **Battlestar Galactica** pilot have since left the project. John Johnston, the artist who drew some of the earliest conceptions for the project, is now working on **Star Wars II**. Dennis Muren, too, is relocating to work on **Star Wars II**.

It would be unfortunate if the subsequent episodes of **Battlestar Galactica** could not keep up to the quality established by the earliest ones. It would also be unfortunate if the remaining episodes of the series ARE up to par, but are wrongly condemned by the fans because they're not as extravagant as the pilot. Let's not pass judgement yet; let's accord **Battlestar Galactica** the same courtesy we initially gave **Star Trek** and continue to appreciate each episode based upon its own merits. ●

## BY THE RAY GUN'S RED GLARE

(Continued from page 59)

Ray blasters (called "sonic disruptors") were designed from machined aluminum bodies and

wooden handles for the episode *A Taste of Armageddon*; these devices were modified for *Errand of Mercy*, at which time they became the Klingon handguns. In addition, the *Enterprise* [together with the *Romulan* and *Klingon* vessels] were equipped with huge phaser-banks that used the same sound-effects left over from **War of the Worlds**.

Over in Great Britain, producer Gerry Anderson's beautiful TV series, **Thunderbirds** and **Captain Scarlet** also featured ray-guns. These I.T.C. series are more realistically presented than most of the 1950's TV efforts, even though they had no "live" performers on-camera; they were produced using "Supermarionation" puppets. For this reason, the miniatures [such as the guns] were more difficult than usual to make, because they were essentially miniatures of miniatures.

Producer Anderson's live-action TV series **U.F.O.** and **Space: 1999** made frequent use of ray projectors in flying saucers, spacecraft and defense sites. The hand guns of **Space: 1999** are similar to those of **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars** in that both are innovative designs that allow for maximum accuracy.

With the new, ultra-high-budget science fiction feature films, the ray guns and ray projectors are becoming more expensive and effective. The gun used by Han Solo in **Star Wars** (20th Century-Fox; 1977) is a converted Mauser (a German-made weapon). The rifles of the Imperial Storm Troopers are reportedly converted British weapons. The Light Sabers are converted flashguns from old cameras. These adaptations were probably done so that people would see slightly familiar objects that would make the entire film more believable. More credibility, more quality; something tells me something good is happening to movie ray guns!



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